553
608 name to the new-born child; a friend of the family may do so, but it is also often a traveller who happens to be in the village to whom this privilege is accorded. He will "*name himself in the child*" (ku titshula ka ñwana). This fact will establish a special relation between this person and the child, a relation which bears some resemblance to that of a godfather to his godson. Once a year he will come and give "his name" (viz. the child) presents. When the child is able to travel, the mother will go with him to pay a visit to his "friend in name" (mabitokulobye).

553 4) A fourth way of naming new-born children is to choose a name having some connection with the *circumstances of the birth*. Should a child have seen the light when his mother was travelling, he will be called *Ndlelen* viz. "on the way," "on the road;" should the birth have taken place under a tree, the name of that tree will be chosen, put in the locative case, and you will meet many Thongas called Nkanyen (under the terebinth), Nkwakwen (under the Strychnos), Nkuwen (under the fig-tree), etc.; or Mpfulen (in the rain), Marumbin (in the ruins), Mawewe, if the child is born during the war waged by the chief of that name, etc. When General Beyers was over-running Zoutpansberg with his commando, the Natives, admiring the swiftness of his movements, named many children after him (1).

551 The names of the Thongas are the same for the two sexes. There are only two which cannot be employed indiscriminately

---

553
789 (1) In the case of *busiwana*, viz. if a woman has lost many children (see Part. I. Ch. II. 8), should she give birth to a new one, a name will be chosen which will protect the new-born infant against the fate of his elder brothers and sisters. I know a boy who was born under such circumstances. His grandfather *Shona* named him after himself in order to bring him good luck. The Rev. H Guye, in an article entitled: "Des noms propres chez les Ba-Ronga" (*Bulletin de la Société Neuchâteloise de Géographie*, 1920) quotes an interesting instance of such a name. A boy was called *Nyamayabo*, viz. their meat. His elders had died and it was thought that they had been eaten by wizards. When this boy came into the world, his parents had abandoned all hope of keeping him alive and said: "It is their meat, the meat which the wizards will eat!" But they evidently thought that this name would be a protection to the child, perhaps because wizards would see that their evil tricks were known, and would fear to be discovered, if they killed it. Such names are called: "names of misery" (mabito ya busiwana, ya ku titjetja), as Bisana or Bisalifu, "the one who hiccoughs death:" wherever he sends his hiccoughs, he spreads death.

862 join with them in blessing the little one. The beak of the sacrificed
782 hen, one of the claws and one of the feathers (psirungulo) will be
755 tied together round the child's neck. A mat is spread on the ground; the child is laid on it and greased with oil and powder brought by the physician. Then he is smeared and rubbed with the bran. The particles which fall on the mat are called *timhore.* They are gathered by the mother who makes a ball of them. In the meantime the father looks for the nest of a certain kind of large ant which is common in the bush. It lives in the earth, but the opening of its hole is tolerably large. There the mother goes at sunset. She introduces the ball into the hole so that the ant will be obliged to take all the *timhore* into the nest. Then she returns home without looking behind her. It is taboo; should she transgress this rule, she would bring back disease to her child.

This rite is the ordinary *hondlola rite* which is performed in this or in a similar way at the close of any serious disease as the conclusion of the treatment, with the view of taking away the defilement of disease. After having *hondlola,* the physician asks for the payment of his fees. For a child he will ask ten shillings or five coins of five hundred reis (1).

854 This hondlola reveals to us the true conception of the nursing period held by the Natives. For them these three first years of the child's life are a period of disease; so many perils threaten the little one's well-being that he can hardly be considered healthy. He is during the whole time under the supervision of the physician, who takes leave of the little patient on the day of the weaning.

854 This view of infancy accounts also for some other taboos. It
789 is *yila* for instance to say of a child who is particularly fat: Wa tika, he is heavy: this would bring mishap to him. One must say: A kota ribye, he is like a stone! It is taboo also in Shiluvane to make use before a child of the word *mfene,* baboon. There is a disease which is called by that name and it would come upon him. One must say: the thing which inhabits the hills, and so on...

(1) In the Mpfumu clan the rite of weaning is somewhat different. I have published in "Les Ba-Ronga" a description of it given by Tobane. It seems that the elements of the cotton string rite and of the broken pot rite are mixed with the proper weaning rite. I think that the description of Mboza is more trustworthy.

1) THE CUSTOM OF THE EROTIC DREAM (Tilorela).

881 When a young man has noticed for the first time an emissio
195 seminis, he is said to have become an adult (a kulile, a thombile)
751 to have "drunk the nkanye." The nkanye is the tree from
which the bukanye is made. It is prepared for the great feast of the new year. *To drink the nkanye* is an euphemism to designate the entrance into a new phase of life, into the age of puberty. According to Mboza, the lad must go early in the morning to wash his body, and that is all. But Tobane says that, in the Mpfumo clan, the family doctor is called; in a broken pot, he roasts pieces of skin of all the beasts of the veldt, together with some half digested grass taken from the stomach of a goat (psanyi). The boy must eat a little of this medicine and rub all his joints with it. This will strengthen him so that, when he has relations with girls, he will not be overcome (gemiwa) by them. This rite, which is very similar to the rite of the broken pot performed for infants, is connected with the "gangisa," the sexual habits of young people which begin at the time of puberty, as we shall see later on.

At this time also, the boy begins to wear the very primitive
881 clothing called *shifado*[1] (sha ku siba, the thing with which one
291 closes, see Annotatio I). In former times they wore only the *mbayi*,
177 a small cylindrical or conical object of woven palm leaves, which
789 was the national dress of the Thongas; the *shifado* seems to be of
832 Zulu origin. It is very much valued as preventing contact with
the earth, as a protection against ants and an aid to continence; the lads who do not wear it are blamed and accused of being *ba-nato*. The word *nato* means a magical medicine by means of which men of low morals throw men or women into a deep sleep during the night, enter the huts of other people and commit adultery with their wives.

2) THE PIERCING OF THE EARS (Ku tjunya, (Ro.), boshela. (Dj.).

881 This also takes place at this period. There are two ways of
304 performing it, either by an actual piercing of the lower lobe
177 with a thorn, or by cutting it with a knife. The first method

---

[1] [See p. 516 in these categories or in 116--Analyst]

834 They must not enter the hut of a person dangerously ill ; this would
784 hasten his death. People who are just recovering from a disease, when
they walk about on the paths, must tie around their ankles the root
381 called sungi, which will protect them against the perspiration or
829 emanation left by married people in their footprints, because, as one
753 of my informants said, "ba-ku-khila ba hisa," viz. married people are
hot.

834 Moreover not only individuals but the whole social life would be
endangered if sexual relations took place when the community itself is
836 in a critical position. They are prohibited therefore in wartime, during
381 the whole duration of hunting parties, and also during the marginal
829 periods. Strange to say, this law does not apply so severely to unmarried
boys and girls amusing themselves according to the "shigango" custom
(p. 97). It seems that it is not the act in itself which is tabooed, but the
act in as much as it is accomplished by regularly married people ; in
this case only has it a bearing on the life of the community.

What is the reason of these prohibitions ? "Married people are hot." What does this aphorism mean ? The following rite may help us to understand it.

831 In the Maluleke country, when the whole population enters a lake
to kill fish according to the tjeba custom (Part IV. Chap. I), a little boy
834 and a little girl are chosen and laid down under a lion's skin, as if they
226 were husband and wife, and told to remain very quiet during all the time
829 the grown up people are fishing. Not knowing anything about sexual
789 intercourse, they will obey ; then the fish also will keep quiet and
will be killed easily. Why ? Because there is in the sexual act
771 something wild, fierce, passionate which, according to the law of
correspondance which is at the base of all Bantu magic, has an
influence on the hostile forces ; these will be excited and more difficult
to overcome : enemies in battle, the animals of the bush during hunting
and fishing parties, disease, danger of contamination at death and
during the marginal periods. Life is, so to speak accelerated by the
sexual act, and this acceleration is communicated to the whole of Nature.
Therefore : Keep quiet, be continent!

This profound conception of life also explains why so often certain actions must be accomplished by children, not yet able to have sexual relations, or by old women who no longer practise them.

Let us remark that all these rites do not belong to Animism, properly speaking, but to Dynamism (Part VI. Chap. I), which plays a part almost as important as Animism in Bantu primitive philosophy.

843 remove the blood. The Thongas think that, as the menses are suspended, the blood accumulates in the body and must be taken away.

Pregnancy is not considered as a tabooed period. As we have just seen, sexual relations are allowed during that time, even recommended as favourable to the growth of the child. However, in view of the impending birth, some special taboos have been added to those which apply to all women.

A pregnant woman *must not drink water when standing up*. She must kneel down, otherwise the water would fall violently on the head of the child and hurt it!

843 It is taboo for her to *wrap her body* in too much clothing.
845 She must keep her belly bare and never throw her dress (kapulane)
over her shoulders, lest the baby come to the light with its head
covered with membranes, a complication which is very much
dreaded by Thonga women.

She must not take *the sauce* of her porridge *too hot*. The child might be scalded inside and have black spots when born.

It is also taboo to *prepare the ntehe before the birth*, as no one knows what will happen. The child might die!

843 The future mother must not eat *pigeon's meat*, because pigeons
825 have no blood in the muscles of their breast. She would have no
milk herself wherewith to nurse the baby. Nor must she even
look at a monkey, lest she "take to herself" (tekela) the form of the
animal and the child be like it!

A woman, in the beginning of pregnancy, must not visit a sick person. The latter might die.

843 As regards women dying during pregnancy, see page 166.

766 *Miscarriages* are very much feared amongst South Africans,
731 not for themselves, but because they are accompanied by an
789 uncontrolled effusion of a blood which is a terrible taboo. The
discharged foetus must be buried in wet soil, otherwise the rain
826 will not fall; the country having been polluted will be dried
up by hot winds. A strange rite called *mbelele* is performed in
times of drought, when all the graves of children born prematurely
and buried on the hill are searched, and their contents thrown
into the mud, near the river. We shall discuss in Part VI the

A woman who has lost many children, three or four, is considered as being in a special position, called *bowumba*, and there are many 765 rules to be observed in order to deal with this "state of bereave- 854 ment." Should a child be born after the death of many elder 761 brothers, he must be carried in a *ntehe* made of a sheep's skin instead of an antelope or goat skin. (See p. 46.) To carry him 844 in an ordinary ntehe is taboo. Should it be a boy, the mother will put girl's clothing on it, and vice-versa. The mother's breast will be smeared with a special medicine, because they are "breasts [862] of the dead (mabele ya bafi)." The child, if it lives, will be weaned as early as possible and be taken to its grandmother. Two curious rites are also practised to protect it against bad luck. The first is the *kunga* ; the second, *rangela bovumba*, seems to belong rather to the Northern clans.

789 The *kunga* rite which we have already met many times (see 761 p. 124) is also performed in the case of a mother who has given 854 birth to a new child whilst in the state of bowumba. To neglect it 844 is a taboo. The bereaved mother keeps silent before her visitors until they have deposited their gifts at her feet and have thus "opened her mouth." Old women having no means to buy a present take a bit of grass and fix it in her hair. Then she consents to speak. She gathers all the bracelets thus obtained and puts them on the ntehe, carrying them everywhere with her.

Another rite is observed in the Northern clans. The child whose elder brothers and sisters have died is taken by the mother to the village of her own parents. There it is buried in the ash-heap up to its neck. Then somebody runs to the village, takes a handful of grains of maize and throws them on the child. Afterwards it is dug up, washed, smeared with ochre and brought home. This rite is called *rangela bowumba*, viz. to *precede* bowumba, to cut it, to treat it : the bowumba will not now come as it has been "preceded". It will be deceived, it will no longer desire the baby, as the baby has been thrown away together with all the refuse of the village on to the ash-heap. It is no longer able to eat mealies, even if it is given grains of mealies ; it is dead! Let the bowumba take no notice of it! (This description of the 789 "rangela bowumba" was given to me by an old Thonga from 761 Spelonken. Mankhelu, my Nkuna informant, called this rite

789 761 "*ringela bowumba,*" from the verb ringa, to try ; it is the attempt to bring some influence to bear on the misfortune of the bereaved mother.)

9) ADULTERY.

837 595 Amongst the Thongas *true* adultery for a *man*, married or unmarried (bumbuye), consists in committing sin with a married woman. Should he have relations with a girl, it leads to no consequences at all. Nobody will blame him, if the girl does not conceive. Should she have a child, he will only be forced to marry her ; she will become his second wife. His first wife will not at all resent his bad conduct. Sometimes she will herself get him the girl he wants. There is nothing in her heart like the jealous dignity of a European spouse! She will keep all her capacity for jealousy (bukwele) for the time when the second wife comes to the village, and shares with her the affection of their common husband! Adultery with an unmarried woman is nothing more than "gangisa."

837 684 692 But should a man have abducted a *married woman*, a woman who has a master (n̄winyi), who has been paid for, then the matter becomes very serious. The husband is very skilful at discovering her misdoing. As soon as he begins to have doubts about the fidelity of his wife, he chooses a friend and asks him to watch her. She is very cunning, her lover also ; but the friend is on the watch and some time perhaps, catches them in the bush, when she goes to gather fuel, or near the pool, where she draws her water. He comes back to the husband and informs him that he has caught them in the very act. Then the husband tells his wife that proof has been obtained and that she had better go at once to her lover and take something from his hut ; she obeys, and comes back with his blanket or any other object. This is "la pièce à conviction." The husband goes with it to the counsellor who is in charge of his village ; together they apply to the chief. The chief sends the counsellor who is responsible for the village of the lover to summon him. The confrontation takes place and the story of the case is investigated.

621 831 all this is done in fun. It is a great day of rejoicing for the "tinamu", who tease each other as much as they like. A man may be wanting in respect even to his great mukoñwana on these days!

621 756 351 789 6) When the huts are ready, the *fence* is built. The family doctor is summoned. The medicine man throws leaves or stones treated with his drugs along the circular line, where the headman intends to place the branches which will form the future fence of the village. This being done, the men erect the fence.

7) Special precautions are taken for *the main entrance*. Poles are erected on both sides, but before they are put in place, the doctor pours medicine into the holes in the ground and also smears the poles with it at the bottom and at the top. Mankhelu used to bury a black stone, taken out of the river, at the gate. This stone had also been smeared with drugs. "In this way, I prevent enemies from entering. Those who come to try their charms against us (ku hi ringa hi maringo) will be attacked by disease and go and die in their houses."

783 834 621 8) The building is finished. Nothing remains to be done but to *ripen the village* (wupfisa muti). Men and women assemble in two separate groups and ask each other if they have been continent during the whole "buhlapfa". If one of them confesses to having sinned, he has stolen the village from the headman; the whole work is spoiled and must be recommenced elsewhere. If all the members of the community have behaved well, they proceed to a purifying ceremony exactly similar to the *hlamba ndjaka* which takes place during the mourning ceremonies. Each couple has sexual relations according to a fixed order of precedence, one every night, and they all go to trample on the spot where the women wash their hands. The principal wife is the last to perform these rites.

621 595 9) Then comes the *drawing to himself of the village by the headman* (kokotela muti). At dawn, after the night when she has had her ritual sexual relations with the headman, his principal wife takes his shield and his assagais and stands at the main entrance, everyone being present. Outside is a thorny branch prepared for the occasion. In her martial attire, she drags this branch to the entrance and closes it.

621 troublesome and he should wish to remove them, he must ask
824 some one else to do it. On the day of his death, or rather when
765 his hut is crushed down, a branch of that tree will be put on the place where the threshhold was, and another used to close the main entrance of the village, a new entrance being then made through the fence and used as the gate during the rest of the mourning period.

621 3) He has sexual relations on the new spot on the first night
833 with his principal wife ; in this way he will *fuya muri*, viz. "possess this tree," and also *fuya muti*, "possess the village." The Ronga *fuya* corresponds here also to the *boha* of the Northern clans (Compare boha puri and fuya ñwana, page 57). If someone precedes him in sexual intercourse, he is guilty ; he has "preceded the village" (rangela muti). By this act the headman has definitely left the old village. The others can go back to it to fetch what remains ; for him it is taboo.

621 4) The same day, all the inhabitants come and move all the
831 roofs, if it is possible to do this in one day. One hut is rapidly
834 built to afford shelter to the inhabitants, in case of rain. The
342 first roof to be transported is that of the hut of the principal wife. This is also done to the accompaniment of obscene songs. These songs are not allowed when only one hut is transported, which may happen when some one goes to live in another village.

It is definitely a custom which goes with the moving of a whole village.

5) The following day two huts are erected, one for the men, the other for the women, because they must not sleep together. "They are still in the bush ; it is buhlapfa ; the village is not yet firm." Those who break this law cause injury to the headman. The bones will soon reveal that "he has been preceded as regards the village ; (a rangeliwile muti)." All the huts are smeared twice ; the women begin to sleep in them, but not the men. The fence and the main entrance must first be prepared.

621 6) The *main entrance* (mharana). The men pull up the grass
789 all the way from the back hut to the place where the main entrance must be, so as to make a road all through the village. All the dried plants weeded out during this operation are carefully

621 gathered in a heap. The headman, on the advice of the medicine
789 man, cuts from certain very vigorous trees such as the nkanye
824 and the ntjondjo, two branches which can live when transplanted. He digs holes on both sides of the entrance and puts the branches into them. Across the gateway, he buries a third branch of the ntjopfa tree, "which causes oblivion" (p. 58): this will be smeared with special drugs in order to increase its efficacy ; it is intended to prevent the baloyi, witches and people speaking bad words. (lit "with bad lips"), from thinking about the village and spoiling it.

621 7) On the evening of that day, the headman and his principal
833 wife have intercourse in their hut and, at dawn, while it is still
789 dark, they go and wash their hands at the main entrance. Mboza does not say that all the other couples must do the same, or trample on the spot. In Nondwane this is sufficient and the rite does not apply to the other couples. But at Manyisa, midway between Lourenço Marques and Khosen, where the Djonga customs are sometimes met with, all the couples must have relations, one after the other, according to order of precedence. It is deemed so important to keep the due order in this "giving to each other the right of resuming sexual life" that, should an elder brother have been absent when the village moved, on his return he must undergo a special treatment in a neighbouring village, during a few days, to avoid any bad consequences resulting from having been unlawfully "preceded" (rangeliwa).

621 8). After the night during which this sexual rite has taken
789 place, at daybreak, all the dried grass is piled in front of the
782 main hut and burnt ritually. The headman throws into the fire a special medicinal pill in order to *give the village over* to his
756 people (nyiketa muti). They all warm their bodies at the blaze, and go and set fire to all the other heaps of dried grass which they made when clearing the soil.

9) The medicine man comes on that same day, and sprinkles the fence with his drugs, in order to protect the village against bush fires, wizards and disease. He walks all round the fence saying : "Happy village! May misfortune not enter here! These are my drugs!" — He starts from one of the poles of the main

621 entrance and finishes his walk at the other, hanging upon it the
789 branch with which he has been sprinkling.

782 10) Then he sacrifices a hen. A young man accompanying him cuts its throat ; the doctor plucks some feathers from the
756 neck, sacrifices in the ordinary way and invokes his gods : "You used to treat villages (daha miti) with these drugs and I do the same. I do not act of my own wisdom ; you have given it to me. Bless this place, etc." Then he plucks a feather from the hen's right wing, and suspends it at the main entrance or in the main hut, inside, over the door, according to the directions given by the bones. This is the *shirungulo* (see Part VI) and the act is called : "to tie the village" (tjimba muti).

621 Amongst the Rongas, there are some other *buhlapfa taboos*. It
372 is not allowable to light any fire in a village until it is completely
784 built. During the whole building period, cooking is done outside the fence ; crushing mealies in the mortars and dancing are also
789 prohibited. Whistling (ku ba noti) is forbidden, as it might call
198 the wizards inside the village before it has been protected by the charms.

621 If a man has many wives, he may build a second village for
595 himself and establish one of them there. A grown-up son, the son of the woman, will represent the headman in that village, but the law of "tying the village" will also be observed in this case. The headman will perform the act with this woman, and preside at the burning of the dried grass and of the medicinal pill, by which he *gives* the village to the inhabitants.

When a younger brother, or a son, leaves the headman and founds a village for himself (tihambela muti), he does it according to the same laws as those observed at the regular moving of a village.

III. *Some remarks on the rules of moving.*

621 Let us now analyse the two parallel sequences of rites which we have just described, and which complete each other. It is easy to discover amongst them three series of rites, social, protective and passage rites.

621 1) *Social rites.* The muti, as we have seen, is a little organised
596 community having its own laws, amongst which the most important
833 seems to be the law of hierarchy. The elder brother is the undisputed
768 master and no one can supersede him. He is the owner of the village.
No one must "steal it" from him. Should any one do so, the whole
community would suffer and no children would be born ; the life of the
organism would be deeply affected. That is the reason why the headman
must go first with his principal wife to have relations with her in the
new village, and thus *take possession* of it or *tie* it. For this same reason,
when the headman dies, the village *must* move. It is taboo to remain in
it. Until the inheritance has been distributed, it is still *his home* (kwa
kwe) ; but as soon as this ceremony has taken place, the villagers must go
away, and close the door with a thorny branch. The part played by the
621 principal wife in all these ceremonies is most remarkable. It is
595 absolutely imperative that the headman should "tie the village" with her,
562 and not with another of his spouses. Should she be very old, the law
768 must be observed all the same; should she be ill, and unable to have sexual
764 relations, the village simply cannot be moved. In the Northern clans
we see her taking the shield and the assagai, closing the village and
"giving it" to the inmates, even performing a sacrifice and praying to the
gods. It is very rare to see a woman presiding at a public religious
ceremony; but she is the owner of the village as well as the headman.
Moving is imperative when she dies as well as after the death of the
headman. The main gate must also be closed and a new entrance made
in the fence to be used during the year of mourning; in the case of her
death, this opening must be made on the left of the regular *mharana*,
whilst, when the husband dies, it is made on the right side; just as in
the hut, when the corpse is removed for burial. (See page 138.)

351 2) *Protective rites.* These are those which concern the fence. This
789 fence does not afford material protection. The branches dry up very
621 soon and, in the case of a bush-fire, for instance, they would do more
harm than good. It is a spiritual protection, a barrier of charms, of
magic influences, to prevent the entrance of wizards and of all the
hostile powers of the bush. We shall understand this better when
treating of witchcraft superstitions. (Part VI.)

182 3) *Passage rites.* The reader will have been surprised to observe
621 amongst the ceremonies of the moving of villages, many features
829 which we have already met with in the circumcision school, or in the
mourning customs. At first sight there seems to be no relation whatever
between the moving of a village, the initiation of boys and the

524 protect himself. He tries to close the access to his position by drawing the line *f*, *g*. But, arrived at *g*, he comes to the end of his saliva (a helela), and A. who started at *h*, having arrived at *i*, turns round the point *g*, where his enemy has stopped miserably, and, going on, *j*, *k*, reaches the opening *d* and triumphantly ends his campaign in *e*!

But E. of the opposite camp has noticed a gate in the barrier X. Q. The saliva has dried there. He quickly carries his blow-pipe across the battle field, squirting all the time, and passes through the opening Y. He draws the line *l*, *m*, *n*, *o* and so destroys the part Q. Y. of the fortification X. Q. Should B. be quick enough, he might prevent him accomplishing his plan by drawing the line *p*. *q*... And so on! Young men, even men of ripe age, take an immense delight in these saliva battles. But the saliva must be blackish... It must be *ntjutju* saliva, viz., saliva produced by hemp, and not the ordinary white saliva, called *matjafula*. Should one of the players try to supplement the blackish by the white, he would be disqualified... His enemy would seize him by the forehead, and force him to lift his head and stop his attack. Should he go on, however, the other would say : "What ? You come to me with matjafula!" This may lead to quarrels, even to blows... The hemp-pipe falls down and it all ends in cordial laughter.

276
861
789
This hemp-smoking custom becomes a passion with many young men. To cure them their parents break the pipe, take a little of the soot which is found inside, and mix it with their food without their being aware of it. When this has been done three times, it is said to fill them with disgust for hemp... Similia similibus curantur... We shall often meet with this medical principle in the Thonga superstitions.

524
171
The most interesting game played by men, a game which fascinates them and which is certainly more refined than hemp-smoking, is the *tshuba*. It is at the same time one of the most widespread games of mankind. Mr. Stewart Culin says, in the Report of the Smithsonian Institute for 1893 and 1894, that it is played under the same name by the American Negroes, and that it is but a variety of the *mancala*, the national game of Africa,

643 "when the Ba-Khosa had emerged from the reed" (See Vol. II,
604 Part VI, III). Nobody might see it except the chief, who kept it
778 hidden somewhere in a hole amongst the rocks. His uterine
nephew alone (ntukulu) knew the place, and when it was necessary
to use it in order to pray to the deceased chiefs, the chief and his
nephew alone were permitted to approach the hiding place ; those
643 who accompanied them had to stop at a distance. This mhamba
778 is lost. Even the chief Ntshongi, who was the paramount chief of
the Ba-Khosa at the beginning of this century, had never seen it.
789 It had been taken by his predecessor Mavabaze and had disappeared
during the political troubles of the Gungunyana's war. Thus it is
impossible to say of what it consisted, and this will probably never
be known. There is no doubt however, that it was used for the
same purpose as the mhamba of the Tembe and Shirindja. Its
magical and religious power came from the fact that it was anointed
with the "nsila" of the deceased chiefs. On the death of a chief,
his "nsila" i. e. the layer of filth resting on his body, was taken
away and the mhamba was rubbed with it. This gave the reigning
[769] chief the power to influence his ancestor-gods, in accordance with
the magic principle : the part influences the whole. It is said that
in former times the Khosa chief Shihanyisane having ill-treated his
two younger brothers, Malashwane and Shalati, these two men
succeeded in taking the chieftainship away from him with the aid
of the Ñwamba clan. Eventually Shihanyisane made peace with
his brothers and gave over the mhamba to Malashwane : a proof
that this mysterious object was in truth considered as the most
important attribute of chieftainship.

643 These regalia are not indeed very imposing to the eye. Thonga
789 royalty had no brilliant insignia... But it had more than that!
751 Each clan possessed a special medicine whose magical virtues were
greatly esteemed ; its possession made the chief invincible, the
warriors invulnerable, the country unconquerable. This powerful
charm is called *mbhulo* (Dj.), *mphulo* (Ro.).

Amongst the Nkunas, the mbḥulo is called *Ñwantiḳalala*. It is kept by those belonging to the Mushwane house, and a man called Papalati is responsible for it. It consists of four calabashes, two male and two female (medicines are considered as having sex,

643 see Part VI) called Madyakakulu, Ñwahondyane, Mbengatamilomu,
789 Masemane. The bones are always consulted to ascertain which
751 calabash (nhungubane) must be employed. The uses of this
medicine are as follows. Every year it is mixed with the first
fruits in the ceremony of *luma*, which will be described later on.
In war time the mbhulo is employed to "fence the country."
Envoys go to all the drifts on the boundary, take stones out of the
river, smear them with the magical powder and place them on the
roads, at the crossways ; should enemies invade the country, they
will be deprived of their strength. The weapons also are sprinkled
with a decoction made of this royal medicine, as we shall see, and it
643 is given to the chief to prevent disease. The father of Papalati was
687 accused of having sold some of this powerful national drug
to the Pedi chief Sikororo, an act which amounted to high treason.

643 I have been fortunate enough to be informed of all the rites connected with the royal medicine in the Mazwaya clan. There, it is called *nyokwekulu*, a word which is probably derived from the verb ku nyuka, to melt. Let Mboza tell us, with awe and profound conviction, of the marvels of this wonderful drug. He was present at its preparation in the year 1893, before the war scattered the clan and destroyed its military power.

644 Each year the nyokwekulu is renewed. Its exact composition
789 is known only to one man, Godlela, the royal magician and priest,
to whom the care of preparing it is entrusted. This man belongs to the house, or sub-clan, of Tlhatlha. He is very much feared. Nobody dares to dispute with him, and he has the right of cursing even the chief. His function is *hereditary*. His father Malubatilo was in charge of the nyokwekulu before him. The law of succession is this ; when the elder brother dies, the position is held by his younger brother. The headmen of the tribe box his ears and say to him : "You will be the master of the medicine! Take great care of it." When all the brothers are dead, it passes to the sons.

So, when the right time of the year has come, the chief consults the bones. The first thing to do is to send messengers all over the country to find a *forked branch*, a "shiphandje," to which the calabash containing the medicines will be hung.

644 When they have chosen it—it must be the stem of a nkonono
789 tree—they cut it and bring it back to the capital. In front
walks the master of the ceremonies, Godlela, and behind him four
men carrying the shiphandje. Those who accompany them
have the right of entering the villages and stealing fowls. Woe
to those who meet with this troop! They will be relieved of
all they carry, "because the forked branch of the great medicine of
the chief is taboo."

644 The sacred branch having duly reached the capital, Godlela
789 proceeds to the second operation, the *burning of the drugs*.
826 Mboza saw the magician take pieces of skin cut from buffaloes,
237 lions, hyenas, elans, panthers, snakes of various kinds and, last
but not least, from the bodies of men, enemies killed in
the wars: part of the skin of the forehead, the heart, the
diaphragm, the nails, a finger, some ears... All these are roasted
644 in a large pot. On some mats are spread various magical roots
789 cut into small pieces; these are also thrown into the pot. The
chief and all the sub-chiefs approach and, with hollow reeds,
inhale and swallow the vapour and the smoke which emanates
from it (1).

The preparation of the great medicine having been sucessfully
accomplished, the great drum (nhumburi) of the capital is
brought on to the square, and everybody dances, even women,
who take assagais in their hands and sing: "We are thankful if we
die (hi tlangela ku fa)" viz., "The country is in security, our
invincible medicine is ready! We shall not be killed by enemies
644 but will die a natural death." Before extinguishing the fire which
789 was used to roast the medicines, Godlela takes a little water,
pours it on the glowing embers and, when it vaporises with the
782 customary sound, he emits the sacramental *tsu* and prays to
his gods, the departed spirits of the Tlhaltha family, as doctors
always do, in order to obtain their blessing on the nyokwekulu.

---

618 (1) The Hlewane sub-clan, which revolted many times against the legal chief and succeeded by its intrigues in provoking the war of 1894, after which it became the reigning family of Nondwane, used to abstain from participating in this "swallowing of the smoke," because, in former years, it had been defeated by Maphunga's people and some of its men killed; their flesh had been used in the concoction of the nyokwekulu. So they feared to go and inhale the odour of their fellow clansmen.

643
789 The royal drug, having been burnt, is reduced to powder and this powder is poured into the calabashes. The forked branch is planted in the sacred hut, which I shall shortly describe, and the calabashes hung upon it. Each sub-chief receives a calabash and takes it to his kraal, where it will help the district in which he reigns to perform the *luma* ceremony. But the greater part of the powder remains at the capital. There it will be used not only for the luma, and for the sprinkling of the warriors (see Chapter IV), but also for two other purposes : 1) for the protection of the country by means of the wooden pegs ; 2) for the filling up of the magical horn.

1) *The wooden pegs* (timhiko). A certain day is fixed for planting the forked branch in the house where the great medicine is kept. Then the doctor, accompanied by some members of the royal family, steals out secretly during the night and goes to the cross-ways, to the strategic points on the borders of the Mazwaya territory. It is taboo for anyone to meet with the party. He plants wooden pegs, and smears them with the powder. As soon as they have been smeared, they become invisible. No one can see them nor tear them out except Godlela. They do not rot. White ants do not attack them. The country is fenced by them.

Should there be any dispute as regards the boundaries of the country, Godhlela will be called. At once the pegs which were invisible appear ; they come out as much as a foot above the ground. If a hostile army was approaching, it will turn back at once, seized with fear at the sight of these pegs.

789 2) *The magical horn*. The remainder of the powder is mixed
825 with a special kind of honey, the honey made by the small black
787 bee called *mbonga*. This bee makes a large spherical nest deep in the ground. Natives have a number of superstitions regarding it. They say the mbonga honey may be eaten by anybody, but it is only members of certain families who can see the nest and dig for it. For other people it is invisible. (See Part VI.) The Ngwetsa family, in Rikatla, was one of the favoured ones! It must be said that the hole through which the mbonga bees penetrate into the soil is in truth very small and escapes the notice

789 of most people! This honey comes from below. It is a hidden,
825 a mysterious thing. A little of it is added to the drug and the
787 mixture is poured into a double horn, viz., two horns whose large ends are firmly fixed to each other, the point where they meet being carefully covered with dung, which acts as glue. A hole has been made in the upper horn and the drug is introduced through this. It is a great means of divination. When war is imminent, the nyokwekulu begins to ferment, and exudes through the hole: "It knows all about war." So the country can prepare for it. No wonder that this powerful medicine is preserved with superstitious awe and the greatest care.

643 A place of honour is reserved for the magical horn in the
595 hut of the first wife of the chief. In the middle of the hearth
372 a perpetual fire burns; it must never be allowed to go out; it
824 is taboo. The wood used for it must be that of a tree found on the sea shore, and called ntjobori. The Makaneta sub-clan must furnish it regularly. It is taboo to take embers from this fireplace, which is called the royal fire, the medicinal fire (ndjilo wa buhosi, wa muri). Should the principal wife let the fire go out, then Godlela must be called on to light it again, rubbing together two sticks of a shrub called ntjopfa. The fire produced by burning this shrub is considered dangerous. It is taboo to cut its branches or to use them for the purpose of warming oneself; the genitalia are said to swell when this law is transgressed (See Part IV). But Godlela does not fear; has he not his drugs to protect himself? He can and must use ntjopfa to re-light the nyokwekulu fire, and he will be given a good reward for his work! The ntjobori, in burning, produces an abundant smoke which leaves a deposit on the horn, on the forked branch and on all the calabashes containing the provision of powder.

643 The queen Mimpanyanhoba who was in charge of the
372 nyokwekulu had no sexual relations with the chief on that account.
595 I do not know if absolute continence is always enforced on the
784 keeper of the sacred fire, as was the case for the Roman Vestal Virgins. But I have been told by Mboza that this woman prevented her co-wives from coming near her hut; it was taboo.

643 The grass of the roof of this hut must never be removed, though
784 it may rot owing to the rains. It is taboo. One simply puts
356 a layer of new grass over the old one, a thing which is rarely
done in the case of ordinary roofs.

643 In case of war, should the clan be obliged to leave the country,
187 a special little hut is hastily built in the bush and the precious
medicine is deposited therein. There is no fear that the enemy
722 will take it, either Whites or Natives, because this hut also has the attribute of invisibility. This happened during the war of 1894 (1). In the case of the *mhamba* of the Tembe and Zihlahla clans it is different; the man who keeps it must run away with it and with the chief.

643 Such are the laws of the mphulo. This great medicine may
789 certainly be regarded as a part of the regalia, and the most important part. It is, for the chief and sub-chiefs, a means of strengthening their authority, as will be seen in the description of the luma rite. On the other hand the mphulo is a collective possession, the powerful magic means by which the clan resists its enemies or conquers them. It occupies the very centre of the national life.

789 In the Manyisa clan the war-medicine is called *mabophe*, and is
726 kept by a man called Chikiza, who belongs to the Ntjeko clan, not
643 to the royal family. He is said to have inherited it from his
787 forefathers. The medicine however belongs to the chief. It is administered as follows. The *ñanga* prepares small heaps of wood on the road, pours a little of the drug over them, sets fire to them and the warriors tread on the embers and extinguish the fire with their feet. This makes them invulnerable or at least protects them against fatal wounds. When they are ready to start for battle, the bones are thrown, and give the following intimation :
643 "Do not kill the first enemy you meet with, but catch him alive, be
789 it a man or a woman, and bring him to the chief." The chief,
726 accompanied by some indumas, must stab him outside the royal kraal ; the body of the deceased enemy will then be cut open, and

---

(1) In the Nondwane the nyokwekulu is still kept by the heir of Maphunga, Magomanyana. The new chief, the usurper, tried to find it, but Godlela refused to give it to him. Thus Mubvesha has no *mphulo*.

789 the fat collected in order to mix it with the war medicine, the flesh
726 being left to the dogs to eat and destroy.

In some clans, chiefs possess *other personal charms* which are
643 very much dreaded and called *psitjemba*. So, in the Maluleke
789 clan, each of the children of the ancient chief Mashakadzi received
from him one of these psitjemba. It consists of a part of the
237 skull of a child, the top of the head, where the pulse is seen
beating at the fontanella. This has been smeared with the
vitreous humour taken from the eyes of lions or elephants, and
powders made from the skins of wild beasts. The possession of
this charm gives the chief a supernatural power. If, being
irritated with you, he invokes his gods by sucking it and emits the
sacramental tsu, he can call on any wild beast he likes to kill you...
He has sacrified with the psitjemba ; you will die!

643 Some chiefs of the Northern clans used to *swallow one of the*
787 *stones* found in the stomach of a crocodile. It is said that
825 crocodiles, when cut open, are found to contain a certain number
of stones, as they are supposed to eat one each year, when the rainy
season comes on. One of them is chosen and smeared with
special medicines and swallowed by the chief. Natives firmly
believe that this stone remains in the body of the chief, and
that it is "his head, his life" (Viguet). When it is passed in his
stools the first time, this is a premonitory warning. When it
occurs a second time, it is a clear announcement that the chief is
about to die. So chiefs can always know when their time is near.
In other clans the crocodile stone is replaced by what is called
ndjalama. Amongst Nkunas this word designates a kind of bright
copper button, which the Pedis of the Palaora mine used to make
and sell. But ndjalama also means large sized beads. Whatever
it is, some chiefs swallowed the ndjalama and were warned by
it of their death. This object, as well as the crocodile stone, is
taboo for subjects to swallow. They would die. It is "buloyi
bya hosi" — "the magical power of the chief."

643 On account of these powerful and dangerous charms possessed
619 by them, chiefs of different clans regarded it as a taboo to stay
in each other's company ; they were afraid lest they might be
killed by the magical power of their colleagues. Maphunga

262 formula : "May this bukanyi do no harm! May we not slay each
782 other under its influence. May it cause no serious quarrels."
796 They are afraid that, during the general intoxication which will
273 shortly prevail, quarrels will arise, some of which may terminate
fatally. During the whole month of bukanye drinking, all business is at a standstill, just as with us all bankruptcy proceedings and all prosecutions for debt are held in abeyance for two weeks during the New Year holidays!

The gods having luma first, the bones are consulted. Should the throw be propitious, the chief will luma next ; thus the opening ceremony of the feast is concluded.

b) The luma of the army.

796 The young people are now assembled to clean up the public
273 square and all the roads ; the ball room must be prepared! The
women of the capital start out early in the morning, beating the *psibubutwana*, that is to say sounding the call that is produced by striking the lips (bu-bu-bu-bu), and they go all over the country gathering the golden fruit ; this is piled up in an enormous heap on the public square and the brew is proceeded with in the following manner. The makanye are pierced (tshunya) with a pointed wooden splinter ; the stone falls covered with a transparent white pulp into the jar ; into this jar is also squeezed out with the fingers all the juice which remains in the pulp adhering to the skin ; this is continued until the jar is h[illegible], when the stones are taken out, and on the following day th[illegible]g is resumed until the jar is full. On the third day the beer has sufficiently fermented to be pungent and agreeable to the taste and is ready for consumption. Empty barrels are easily procurable in the environs of Lourenço Marques. The women of the capital brew ten or fifteen huge casks of the precious liquor! This accomplished, the second ceremony begins.

796 A convocation of the entire male portion of the tribe is held in
273 the capital, but the first to respond to the call must be the men,
289 the warriors of the army, who come in full array, with all their
701 ornaments, and carrying their small play shields. One cask of

796
273
789
701
761

beer is selected, into which is thrown the black powder, the great medicine of the land, called in this case *buhlungu bya miluru*, the powder of the miluru. The nuru, plur. miluru, is the mysterious spiritual influence which a man or a beast killed by the assagais can exert on the slayer, making him lose his head and commit acts of folly, or, at least, have red eyes (shenga mahlo). We shall again meet with this curious conception when

Bukanye drinking new [illegible]. (Portuguese East Africa.) Phot. A. Borel

studying the rites of the army and of hunting. All those who are proudly conscious of having killed a man in war must first drink the new beer which has been medicated to keep them from killing any of their compatriots during the ensuing weeks of the bukanye. They approach one after the other, the chief also, if he be a man-slayer. Each of them receives a small calabash (ntcheko, p. 50) full of the fermented liquid. He jumps and runs in the direction of the entrance, drinks a mouthful, spits it out with tsu and says: "Father and mother! May I live! May I hold the calabash! Even to morrow! For ever!" People laugh. He is very happy! Others sing and dance the war dance:

796 "We drink the bukanye anew! Who would have thought that
273 we should drink again from this cup", viz., "that we should have
789 escaped all the dangers of war" (Hi nwa nkanyi lomu'mpsa! Afa
hi nga hlayi epsaku hi ta nwa ntcheko lo kambe).

701 After this, the casks are distributed to the other warriors, who drink to their hearts' content. The addition of the black powder is not absolutely necessary in their case. They can luma without it. Then the war circle is formed and the principal counsellors harangue the assembled warriors, giving them the following advice: "Drink in peace (ha hombe). Let no one spoil this bukanye by transfixing his brother with his assagai. Go and drink in your villages. Do not pick quarrels with strangers passing through the country, etc." The gathering then disperses.

c) The luma in the village.

796 The preparatory luma is accomplished. The *yila* has been
273 removed. Now comes the third act: the drinking in the villages.

786 The women who remained at home while the men-slayers went to luma at the bidding of the chief, have gathered large quantities of makanye. The tree is to be found extensively all over the country, as no female plant is ever cut down; there is one or more in every field, and every one possesses such a tree, as every one owns a field; when all the trees in the gardens have been stripped of fruit, the women pass to the trees growing in the bush far from the villages.

But here also everything must be done in right order of precedence; the petty chief of such a district must commence to luma in the presence of his subjects, and not until after he has done so can the people drink freely in the villages. From this moment, however, there is no further restriction. Drinking continues day and night, night and day! When the supply is finished in one village, they go to the next. These feasts are the saturnalia, the bacchanalia, the carnival of the tribe! During these weeks some individuals are in a continuous state of semi-intoxication. Orgies on all sides, songs and dances! The younger men run along the paths, with a more or less unsteady

539 There is quite a collection of these carriers' songs praising the
chiefs. Mzila (or Muzila), whom we saw a short time back scaring
sparrows, is here compared to the mythical lightning bird, to the
hawk that swoops down from the clouds. (See Part VI.) Why
does he not once for all annihilate the sparrows which pillage his
fields of sorghum ? But this is poetry! and there is often a wide
gap between poetry and reality!

d) The feasting of the chief in the villages.

796 The fourth and final act of the bukanye feasting in which, as we
have seen, the chief plays a prominent part, is the *nsungi* which
273 may be called the "fin de saison" orgy. The chief now returns
643 the visits of his subjects and casks of beer are prepared for him
in every village. Dancing and singing are in full swing. He
is fêted and acclaimed! But the makanye are getting over-ripe ;
a new month, a new moon is at hand, which is called *sibandlela*
"she who closes the roads ;" the paths leading to the foot of
the trees become almost impassable, owing to the grass which
grows to an incredible height during the rains prevailing at this
season. The fine weather is over. Winter is knocking at the
door.

796 Amongst the Nkunas the luma ceremony called "to eat the
789 new year" (dyaka ñwaka) is performed with a special pumpkin
(kwembe) cooked at the capital together with the medicine used
643 for rain-making. The chief first eats of it in the evening and
262 makes the sign of a cross on the big drum, which is then beaten
821 to call the people in his village. Then all the men come, bringing
the little horns in which they keep the rain medicine (See Part VI).
They eat a little and smear the rim of these horns with the
medicine ; the horns also must "eat the new year." Then
everybody can enjoy the products of the harvest. Should anyone
precede the chief, this would be fatal to the latter or make him ill...
Such is the testimony of Mankhelu. I suspect these rites to have
been influenced by the proximity of the Ba-Pedi. "Now we have
no longer any first fruits' feast (mulumo)," says Mankhelu with
some melancholy. "White people have killed it. Everybody

262 eats freely in his house according to his good pleasure. Formerly
821 we used to take the oxen of the man who had dared to steal the
796 new year."

Conclusion on the luma rite.

796 All these luma rites[1] of first fruits seem to have primarily a *religious*
782 *origin.* The Bantus do not feel that they dare enjoy the products of
554 the soil unless they have first given a portion of them to their gods. Is it not these gods who make the cereals grow? Have they not the power even of controlling the wizards who bewitch the fields? These rites are also evidently dictated by the *sense of hierarchy*. A subject must not precede his chief nor a younger brother the elder in the use of the new harvest, else they would kill those in authority. Such an act is against order. We shall see that, even when the seeds are sown, the elders must take precedence. But the custom seems also to have been actuated by the idea of *passage*. There is a passage from one year to another. For the Thongas, I think the new year begins
805 twice every year: it begins when tilling recommences, in July, August,
796 when the heat returns. This is the hlobo. It begins a second time at
789 harvest, and then there is passage from the food of the last year to the food of this year. This is the nguba (Ro.) or n̈waka (Dj.). Though the luma rites do not bear all the characteristics of a true passage rite, like those of circumcision or moving, we may observe in the luma of bukanye a kind of marginal period of general licence, when the ordinary laws are more or less suspended. The taking of a first mouthful probably signifies the aggregation to the new period, the magical powder used on this occasion being a protective measure to shield them from the calamities of this unknown year... And after all, is it not that feeling of fear which so easily takes possession of the heart of man when entering on a new state and starting something fresh, which has led the savage to surround the use of the first fruit with so many ritual precautions?

IV. *Taxation.*

643 The chief governs (fuma). *Fuma* means to command, but also to live in plenty, to be rich. The subject (nandja, follower) obeys; he follows the chief who marches before him just as the

[1] [See pp. 394-404. in these categories cf. in 116--Analyst]

685 721 *Theft* (ku yiba) is universally condemned, not so much for its immoral character as for the fact that it renders a normal social life impossible. The notion of *individual property*, though it is not developed as in more civilised nations, is nevertheless at the base of the whole Bantu system. The Bantus are agriculturists. They believe that the products of their labour belong to them and that no one else is entitled to appropriate them. The notion of property is in direct relation to work accomplished. (Compare Part IV.)

685 574 202 To steal growing mealies is not usual. A thief breaks off the cob, whilst the master of the field first uproots the stalk and then takes the cobs. If a friend of his who happens to be travelling passes through his gardens and wants to eat a cob, he is quite welcome to do so. He also uproots the stalk, puts it on one side of the road or leans it against a tree and draws a line on the ground from the place where the stalk grew to the spot where he has put it. Perhaps the owner of the field will discover the uprooted stalk after a whole month. If he inquires who has helped himself to his mealies, his friend will say to him : "Did you not see the line ?" And they will laugh over it (hlekelelana). A thief acting hastily would not have had time to draw the line!

685 789 There are certain magical drugs with which people smear mealie stalks (see Part IV) and they assert that, if any one tries to penetrate into their garden to steal, he will have his hand caught and will not be able to get rid of the plant! For some reason or another, these magical methods do not always work. So the injured person has recourse to the tribunal.

685 343 Should the thief be caught in the very act, there is no difficulty! His own field will be taken by the owner of the stolen mealies and he will have to pay a fine of one ox, otherwise the matter will be brought before the Court, and the only difference will be that the fine will be of two or three oxen, one of which will remain in the hands of the chief. (Mankhelu.) If the thief has been clever enough to avoid being caught, if he has stolen from a store hut, Natives are clever detectives and he will probably be discovered. These store huts are generally built in the middle of the field, or in the little bush which surrounds the village ; the grass all around

643 754 787 789 and Part VI). — To protect and to prolong his life, diviners sometimes call together the whole clan in order to discover and eventually arrest those who might bewitch and kill the chief. This gathering is called *nyiwa* (See Part VI). — As for rain making, it is in the hands of the proper rain doctors (Nkuna) or is done by the ceremonies of *mbelele* (Part VI). — He is not held responsible for public calamities. — If his bodily or mental powers fail, the tinduna discuss matters in his stead and he is not deposed.

643 769 Chiefs are never worshipped during life time. After death, they are deified for their own family, who worship them, but not for their subjects. — They are not supposed to turn into wild beasts after their death. — The custom of appointing mock kings does not exist. Only on the death of a chief can one of his relatives be nominated to take his place, and watch over his property until the adjudication of the inheritance.

535/703 An extraordinary war spirit comes over them all..." And every one having witnessed these performances in the Thonga or Zulu mukhumbi will confess that they are wonderfully impressive. It is a mixture of dramatic, epic and lyric poetry, three literary *genres* which are still confounded, the whole being enhanced by a deep, wild music and subject to the laws of a certain artistic style.

703/643/726 The fighting instincts are excited to the highest pitch by these patriotic choruses and dramatic representations. Thus should the troops be slow in making a start, the young men go dancing to the chief and beg him to "grant them permission" to go forth and slay, or rather to "give them men" to slaughter (ku nyika). The Native idea appears to be that the chief holds the lives of the enemies in his hands; without his permission they cannot go forward, but this once given, they rush enthusiastically to the fray. They even go so far as to taunt him with being an old woman, a coward, because he will not let them go at once (1).

When the excitement has reached the culminating point, and it has been definitely decided to fight, the time has arrived for the magic treatment by which the warriors will be rendered invulnerable.

G. ADMINISTERING THE WAR-MEDICINE.

726/177/789/751 This custom is probably of ancient origin, but I have reason to believe that, amongst the Ba-Ronga, it was practised without any great formality until the advent of the Zulu influence, when it was brought into much greater prominence and invested with more solemnity. "Drinking the war-medicine" took place on several occasions during the revolt of 1894 to 1895. At *Zihlahla* this potion was administered to all warriors before the rebel attack

(1) Gungunyana, on one occasion, when his warriors were importuning him with similar requests, sent the more ardent spirits to wage war unarmed against the wild beasts, and I was told they actually succeeded in capturing a leopard alive and brought it back to the chief!

726 on the town of the 14th October 1894 ; also prior to the ambuscade
789 in the outskirts of Lourenço Marques, on the 7th January 1895,
751 and before the battle of Morakwen, the 2nd February following.
According to my informant, the chief doctor of the army prepared the medicine in a huge dish with leaves and roots cut into slices. These ingredients possessed an effervescent quality ; the medicine-man stirred up the decoction and with it sprinkled the whole army formed in a circle. After this every warrior was fully persuaded that he was invulnerable, that the bullets would be deflected on either side of him, or, even should they hit him, they would be flattened against his body and fall harmless to the ground. The charm could only be broken by the warrior turning his back to the foe. Then the bullets might pass through him. I have met with very intelligent Natives who were perfectly convinced of this fact, although open to reasonable argument on all other points. They told me that certain Natives who were bowled over by grapeshot, picked themselves up after the fight, came to life again, or rather regained consciousness and then, with their fingers, extracted the bullets, which had all remained imbedded in the skin!

A *Nondwane* warrior described to me, in the following terms, the administering of the magic potion, as it was done on the 7th January 1895 before the battle of Morakwen. The whole army was assembled at Nkanyen, on the bank of the Nkomati. It was there that the magician prepared the medicine, with two young girls as assistants. While he was brewing the mixture and making it froth, the soldiers, formed in a semi-circle, looked on, standing erect, poising their assagais on a level with their
726 heads. Then a *ntjhopfa* was cut down (the shrub of oblivion,
789 often employed by Native doctors and of which we have already
751 noted the use in other ceremonials) and a branch laid across the
824 road. The several battalions were called up, one after the other,
and every man had to jump over the branch and take a mouthful of the medicine, which he spat out again, pronouncing the sacramental *tsu* which accompanies the offerings made to the gods : he subsequently went off, running and dancing and getting ready to go forth and kill. When each one had taken his share of the medicine and it was all finished, the doctor said to them : "Now I

726 have given you all my strength ; go and slay." They crossed the
789 river at night and having reached the left bank, at a point about ten
751 kilometers from the Portuguese camp at Morakwene, they were
made to observe the strictest silence for a long time. Then they
felt that valour (burena) had taken possession of them!

Amongst the Ba-Nkuna the war-medicine is also administered
under the form of *sprinkling*. This sprinkling may take place
in time of peace, when danger threatens. The chief kills a black
ox and the army, summoned to the capital, is sprinkled and eats the
flesh of the ox. This will make the country ready for any
eventuality. But the ceremony is much more serious when
war is at hand. Then the "great medicine of the country,"
carefully kept in the calabashes of the Court magicians, is mixed
with *psanyi* of slaughtered sheep and with white sand taken
from the river. During the night, the mukhumbi is formed
and all the men sit down, their heads bowed over their knees,
726 their eyes closed, in perfect silence. Then one of the queens,
789 an old woman who no longer has any sexual relations, enters
751 the circle, absolutely naked. She dips a leafy branch into the
562 magical infusion and marches all round, inside and outside,
sprinkling all the warriors and muttering the following words :
"Kill them, break their pots, kill their dogs, catch their chief,
bring him here, bring so-and-so and so-and-so." The warriors
tremble with emotion. They pray to their gods in a low tone :
"Save me! Help me!" But none of them dares to raise his eyes!
They know quite well that they would die!

It is extremely important that the officiating woman should be old and have had no sexual relations for a long time, or "the assagais would lose their strength ; the masculine weapons would become blind and the feminine weapons alone would see... The woman would have untied the knot of the assagai ; she would cross the way (tjemakanya) of the great medicine... She must be a quiet woman (a rula)". (Mankhelu).

726 Similar customs exist in *Maputju*, where the medicine is called
789 "the medicine of hatred,"—that which dispels all natural feeling
828 and makes a man capable of killing his fellow-man! I give the
particulars of this curious medical treatment as I have them from

726 one of the Natives of the country : there are no fewer than seven
789 acts in this grand performance of "preparation for battle."

643 828 *a)* In the first place when the chief foresees that a campaign is imminent, he has water drawn, and all the necessary ingredients gathered together : then he goes into retirement for one month, during which he is busy preparing the medicine with the magician who knows all about the recipe.

b) At the end of this time the entire army is summoned to the capital. A bull is brought out before the assembled soldiers and the chief strikes it on the head with a stick : this infuriates the animal, which must be caught and thrown down by the men unarmed ; the chief then approaches and kills it with an axe. They dismember the carcase, cutting off the flesh in strips, which they cook in a large battered pot, stirring it with their assagais and pouring into it at the same time "the medicine of hatred."

c) On this day the army is mustered and formed in a circle. The Commander-in-Chief takes the meat, cuts it into small pieces and mixes with it certain human ingredients : a finger taken from a hostile petty chief killed in battle has been carefully preserved ; the dried up phalange is scraped and the bone-dust thus obtained is mixed with the medicine. This additional ingredient is to prevent any feeling of remorse, any prickings of conscience : "ku susa lipfalo," literally "to remove the diaphragm," the seat of the conscience, according to Ronga ideas. (See later on a more probable explanation of this rite.) The Commander-in-Chief takes the pieces of meat thus seasoned and throws them into the mouths of the soldiers, who must not touch them with their hands. The food must be received between the teeth ; any meat falling to the ground is picked up by the children.

d) On the following day, the whole army proceeds to a large lake (the lake of Shika, near the village of Nhlampfukazi) to be treated with another medicine, an emetic. This is placed on a skin in the middle of the lake : the skin is withdrawn, leaving the particles of the drug floating on the water ; each warrior must stoop down and swallow a mouthful of the emetic. He will vomit yesterday's meat : "fear will be thrown up and valour will remain"

726 643 (ku hlantiwile butoya, ku sele burena). The chief having meanwhile taken up his position on a neighbouring hill, the several regiments rush towards him, surround him and beg to be sent as soon as possible to fight and to slay.

726 643 372 789 *e)* But, before this can be done, the chief returns to the capital, the army following him. A double trial has still to be undergone. A large broom is made of small branches of trees soaked in fat from sheep's tails and is then set on fire. The chief walks round carrying his flaming torch, passing it rapidly before the faces of the warriors formed in a circle. Some of the helmets catch fire and the wearers are promptly ordered to fall out of the ranks. The chief addresses them in angry tones : "Deliver up to me," he says, "the charms you are concealing! 'Tis only I, the chief, who may possess enchanted drugs. You certainly have some, as your plumes took fire... Look at the other warriors ; the feathers on their heads are not burnt!" This trial is probably a means of frightening suspected traitors or of expelling wizards (baloyi).

726 643 789 *f)* All shields are now "presented" all round the circle. The chief bends back the point of an assagai and with it strikes each shield, but not with sufficient force to pierce it... This "consecration" of the shields will doubtless make them a more secure protection against the enemy's weapons.

g) Lastly the series is closed by the "aspersion." A mortar is produced in which some leaves are soaking ; these are stirred round in water and the chief sprinkles the whole army. This is the final ceremony. The chief remains at home : the warriors thus fortified and protected against all dangers start on their expedition.

This last act only is performed in the clans of Shirindja, Ñwamba and Zihlahla.

H. ON THE WAR PATH. THE BATTLE. STRATEGY. PANICS. RETURN HOME.

726 The *mukhumbi* has been "built" for the last time. Proclamations have all been issued. Nothing remains but to start.

This *starting of the army* (ku thethwa) is also done according to

000 smoke, and rub the incisions with the powder. They will then
be able to aim straight (See Annotatio 15). The powder specially
prepared from the tendons of slain enemies will be spread on
the paths during future wars ; foes marching on it unknowingly
will suddenly become unable to walk and will easily be killed.

The Zulus are said to have the same customs as the Pedis.
726 I cannot guarantee that all the Thonga clans observe all these
789 customs.[1] The Nkuna magicians, in olden times, before they were
278 influenced by their Pedi neighbours, used to dissect the tendons
751 of the back (riringa) of the slain enemy, which they smeared
826 with his medulla and hung to the shields of the warriors...
Enemies seeing these shields would "tjemeka nhlana" — "have
their backs broken," a figurative expression which means to be
terror stricken. A part of the body was also preserved and
mixed with the war-medicine ; the idea which underlies this
custom being evidently this : when you have eaten the flesh of
your enemies, you have absorbed all their strength and they are
unable to do you any further harm (1). We have seen that the
"mbhulo," the "nyokwekulu," all the powerful "medicines of the
country" carefully kept in each clan, contain a little human flesh.
These drugs are used as protective war medicines ; most probably
owing to the same principle.

II. *The treatment of the slayers.*

727 To have killed an enemy on the battle-field entails an immense
775 glory for the slayers ; but that glory is fraught with great danger.

---

(1) This custom is the only remnant of anthropophagy remaining amongst the
266 Thongas, and I wonder if this superstition is not the true explanation of the origin of
cannibalism. Where cannibalism still prevails, as amongst the Fañ of the Congo,
I am told that the bodies eaten are generally those of hostile clans, or occasionally that
of a wife (who belongs to another clan according to the laws of exogamy). Is it not
probable that, in the beginning, these feasts had a ritual and military value similar to
that which we find in the administering of the war-medicine in South African tribes?
In the course of time, the Fañ acquired a taste for human flesh and ate it for their own
pleasure. Dealing with anthropophagy, I must not forget that it occurred in several
instances in South Africa after the devastation brought about by the Zulu expeditions
of 1820-1830. In Zoutpansberg, in the mountains of Drakensberg, Natives reduced
to starvation began to eat their fellow men. This also happened in the Bokhakha
during the reign of Queen Male. (See Part IV.)

[1] [See pp. 476-477 -- Analyst]

727 They have killed... So they are exposed to the mysterious and
775 deadly influence of the *nuru* and must consequently undergo a
828 medical treatment. What is the *nuru* ? *Nuru* is the spirit of the
783 slain which tries to take its revenge on the slayer. It haunts him
and may drive him into insanity : his eyes swell, protrude and
789 become inflamed. He will go out of his mind, be attacked by
761 giddiness (ndzululwan) and the thirst for blood may lead him to
fall upon members of his own family and to stab them with his
assagay. To prevent such misfortunes, a special medication is
required : the slayers must *lurulula tiyimpi ta bu*, take away the
nuru of their sanguinary expedition. (Lurulula comes from nuru,
plur. miluru (1).

In what does this treatment consist ? The slayers must remain for some days at the capital. They are taboo. They put on old clothes, eat with special spoons because their hands are

---

764 (1) We met with the notion of *nuru* for the first time à propos of the rite of
775 luma (p. 400) ; we shall find it again when dealing with hunting customs (Part IV).
The nuru is to be feared not only in the case of slain enemies but in connexion
761 with any human corpse. As a proof, I may quote the following curious story
which Spoon told me and of the truth of which he was fully convinced. A
traveller died under the great fig-tree of Libombo (near Rikatla). He had climbed on
to the tree and fallen on his own stick, which he had planted in the ground. He was
not buried, as no one knew him. So his corpse fell into decomposition on the spot;
his skull became white. Later on a bush fire burnt all the grass and the skull was
764 seen for years "saying mpha" (it was shining), the teeth "saying bva" (descriptive
775 adverb, same meaning). One day the boys of Libombo went to pick wild figs from
the tree and again saw the skull. Spoon was one of them. The fire had just passed
755 by again. "We beat it with our sticks and amused ourselves by rolling it over like a
789 ball. We did not know it was a human skull... When we got home we began to be
seized by the drunkenness of nuru, the disease of those who have killed a man. During
761 the night we were delirious (hanta-hanteka), our eyes swelled and were full of exudations (malanga), the four of us, Tsukela, Tlabin, Sibakuze and myself. Next morning
my uncle went to the fig-tree and saw that we had killed a man there ! The medicine-man who understands the treatment of nuru, Dudela, who had been a slayer in war, called
us to his village. We stood in a line before him ; he poured a little of his powder into the hands of each one of us, took a little in his mouth, rubbed his forehead. Then
he insulted us saying : "You will die ! Who began beating that skull ?" Each of us
denied having given the first blow. Then he said : "Take care ! Do not go there
any more nor near that nkuhlu tree where another corpse has been burnt under the
leaves ! Go away."

514 When a man has murdered another in a scuffle, he can replace this nuru medicine
789 by his own urine. He must drink a little of it and rub his forehead with it. The
giddiness will pass away. If the murder has been committed from a distance, as with
775 a gun, the nuru is not so much to be feared, as the enemy was far away. A little of
the medicine will be sufficient to treat the murderer. Spoon is ignorant of the compo-
626 sition of the nuru drug.
761

727 "hot" and from special plates (mireko) and broken pots. They are
forbidden to drink water. Their food must be cold. The chief
783 kills oxen for them (yi ba lumisa hi tihomu); but if the meat
834 were hot it would make them swell internally "because they
761 are hot themselves, they are defiled (ba na nsila)." If they ate
hot food, the defilement would enter into them. "They are black
(ntima). This black must be removed" (Mankhelu). During
all this time sexual relations are absolutely forbidden to them.
727 They must not go home to their wives. In former times the
Ba-Ronga used to tatoo them[1] with special marks from one eyebrow
304 to the other. Dreadful medicines were introduced into the incisions
and there remained pimples "which gave them the appearance of a
buffulo when it frowns" (1).

789 After some days a medicine-man comes to purify them (ku ba
727 phutula), "to remove their black." There seem to be various
783 means of doing it, according to Mankhelu. Seeds of all kinds are
put into a broken pot and roasted, together with drugs and *psanyi*
of a goat. The slayers inhale the smoke which emanates from the
pot. They put their hands into the mixture and rub their limbs
with it (ba tilula) especially the joints.

789 Viguet describes this last act thus :—Pieces of medicinal roots
727 are put into the broken pot and roasted. They inhale the smoke.
782 Then cow's milk is poured into the pot on the embers and,
when it boils, they have to put their fingers into it, one hand
after the other, and pass them across their lips emitting the
sacramental : "tsu" (which proves that it is a sacrifice to the gods,
a religious act). Afterwards they say : "Phee! phee!" — viz.,
789 phephela phansi, (Dj. tikela hansi), "Go down, sink." This
727 means : "May you go deep into the earth, you, my enemy and
783 not come back to torment me." The last part of the treatment
consists in rubbing the biceps, the legs, and the whole body with
this milk. The medicinal embers are carefully collected, and
reduced to a powder ; this will be put into small bags of skin called
tintebe which the slayer will wear round his neck. They contain

---

578 (1) Hence an expression which is still in common use. When a Ronga wants to defy some one he says to him : "You are a coward! If you say you can tackle me come and kiss my forehead."

[1][i.e., the slayers returned from battle--Analyst]

789 the medicine of the slayers of men. At bukanye time they can
727 use it to *luma*, viz., to season the first calabash they drink (See
828 page 400). For this purpose it is as good as the great mbhulo,
783 "the medicine of the country," provided by the chief, and it will
prevent them attacking their own people under the influence of drink. The *tintebe* will also be helpful in future battles. The insanity which threatens those who shed blood might begin early. So, on the battle-field itself, just after their deed, warriors are given a preventive dose of the medicine by those who have killed on previous occasions and who wear tintebe.

789 The period of seclusion having been concluded by the final
783 purification, all the implements (mizilo) used by the slayers
during these days, and their old garments, are tied together and
727 hung by a string to a tree, at some distance from the capital,
where they are left to rot (1).

Having reached their homes, the slayers have still to complete the cure by chewing a piece of root called monungwane every morning and evening, and spitting it out in the direction of the rising or the setting sun with the same exclamation: "Phee! phee!" — "Go down, sink!" The piece of root is tied to the assagay (2).

727 The description of the rites performed for the treatment of the slayers
828 applies especially to the Northern clans. But the following narrative
789 of an old man named Makhani from the Rikatla region shows that
783 similar customs were also in existence amongst the Ba-Ronga. This
man had wounded an enemy in a battle; the wound proved fatal and the

---

(1) I had the good lock to find those which were used for the purification of the slayers after the Moudi fight during the Sikororo war and they are now in the Ethnographical Museum of Neuchâtel. They consist of half a dozen old calabashes, a pair of sandals, etc.

171 (2) Purification customs [illegible] warriors are somewhat different amongst the Pedis. After the Moudi battle, the slayers of Maaghe's yimpi had to undergo the following medicinal treatment: the heart of the slain having been torn out, the muscles of their faces sliced off, their limbs amputated, all these portions of human flesh mixed with drugs and ox-flesh were cooked in a pot, the assagais being used to stir the horrible broth. This was poured into a flat basket which it is taboo to touch; some one drew it with a curved assagay as far as the middle of the square. Then the slayers, having been previously white-washed with clay, advanced on their knees, and, with vociferations or cries imitating vultures, caught a piece of meat in their teeth, not touching it with their hands. Their wives are said to participate in this meal, as being also contaminated by the defilement of their glorious husbands.

727 enemy died later on, after his return to his home. Makhani did not
828 know this. One day he became suddenly delirious and rushed about
789 all over the village trying to stab his own people. "Oho!" said those
783 who saw him, "it is because the man he wounded has died!" They at once called the magician who possessed the nuru medicine, a man of the Mapsanganye clan, who came with his calabash. In this calabash there was a carved stick cut from a tree called shiralala, the extremity of which must always remain plunged in the medicine. The magician dipped this stick into a mixture made of honey and the drug, and passed it over the lips of Makhani, who seized it with his tongue, sucking it as the magician moved it from right to left, and licking his lips. A drop of the medicine was then put into each ear, on each upper eye-lid, and below the sternum. He was then cured and, taking a lighted torch, he threw it in the direction of the enemy's country with threatening words : "A ba fe, bafo, ba bola i. e. Let them die, the enemies, let them rot. I will kill still others!" Every day he had to go to the pool and wash his body, treating himself with the tintebe powder.

727 During the weeks following the battle heroes do not only
301 wear the tintebe, besides these miluru amulets, they have the
703 right to wear certain trophies. These are in the first place
554 antelope or goat's horns pierced at the base ; they thread a string through the hole thus made and tie them round their necks (See illustrations, p. 33 and 453). They also make necklaces of small pieces of wood, notched in a peculiar manner and burnt in the fire ; a hole is made through these and they are strung together like beads and worn round the neck. Sometimes these necklaces are made so long that they are worn as a bandoleer. I recollect seeing the Matjolo warriors returning from their expedition of February 1895: they came to show themselves off to the Whites at Lourenço Marques, gloriously proud of having massacred defenceless women and children whom they had surprised in the early hours of the morning! People threw them pieces of silver which they converted into brandy! (1)

---

727 (1) The terrible malediction which rests on those who have killed an enemy
775 is well illustrated by the following story which the Rev. C. Maphophe told me of an event that had taken place not long ago in the Shihongi country (Manyisa district).
761 A man of the Ndzindzi family had killed a Ndjao during one of Gungunyana's expedi-

245 the cause of the desolation. Planting new trees is consequently
784 a taboo! Nowadays however, this superstition has died out,
824 and one may see a great number of mango, orange, lemon (1),
and pho-pho trees in Thonga fields, on the Coast as well as in
Zoutpansberg.

[351] Natives do not generally fence their gardens. Stealing is
therefore very easy and it is no wonder that they have recourse to
685 magical means to protect themselves. Here are some of them ;
719 they are characteristic instances of Bantu magic.

The *rihehlo*. This consists of a kind of mysterious influence exerted on the thief by throwing a magical powder into his footprints or by taking a little of the earth found in these footprints and treating it with the drugs. The inhabitants of the village where the thief lives will be seized by disease ; this will induce them to come to the owners of the garden to confess their fault and pay a fine. Then the magician who had furnished the drug will give them a counter-drug and they will be healed! Amongst the Pedis, the magician anoints with his drugs the stem from which a cob has been stolen. Then the thief will feel intolerable suffering in his little finger and come to the village of the people whom he has robbed crying : "I have stolen!" He pays the fine, receives in exchange the counter-drug and the pain ceases! (Spelonken)

The tinhlamalala. This is the name of the central nervules of the leaves of the Hyphaene palm tree. They are like little snakes, very slender, and flexible. To make the resemblance still greater, the owner of a field makes a knot at the extremity of the rod : this represents the head of the snake. Then he looks for the dried skin which has been cast off by a real snake ; he reduces this to ashes, makes a powder with these ashes and anoints the rods. He weaves the rods together to form a kind of crown and places it on one of the mealies stems in his garden. When the thief

---

137 (1) The lemon tree is called mbomu (mu-mi). This seems to be a Native word and the tree also may be indigenous in the country. It grows wild on the banks of the Lower Nkomati to such an extent that there is an island in the river, some distance above Morakwen, which is called Ilha dos Limões, Lemon Island. The lemons are of large size and their rind resembles that of the orange.

enters the field, the tinhlamalala at once transform themselves into small snakes which also bear the name of tinhlamalala. 685 789
(Notice the correspondence of names: a curious instance of verbal magic.) These snakes rush towards the thief, who runs away, seized with terror. Should he take the stolen cobs with him instead of throwing them on to the ground, the tinhlamalala would follow him to his village! This dreadful powder was prepared by a Nkuna named Ñwadjokwane and the people of his village used to inoculate themselves with the drug ; in this way they had nothing to fear from the snakes.

*

* *

Answers to some of Professor Frazer's questions on Agriculture. 241
There are no special ceremonies at the clearance of land for cultivation ; no grafting, nor artificial fertilisation of fruit trees is practised. (They think that trees fecundate each other by means of their roots. See, later on, paragraph on Thonga Botany). They do not believe that a deity animates the crops, only that baloyi (wizards) can increase or diminish the product of the fields (See Part VI). As regards the rite of driving away the vermin from the fields, we shall describe it in Part VI. There are no superstitions about the last corn cut, and no special ceremony practised on the harvest field. Except the rule of silence which must be kept by women threshing rice and Kafir corn, there are no special regulations for persons engaged in agricultural operations, and no sexual taboos. The plough, the hoe, the pestle and the winnowing basket are not used in ceremonial purifications or to avoid dangers.

*

* *

As regards Agriculture, it cannot be said that the Thonga tribe is in a very backward stage. Thongas, as well as most of

menstruation, to persons in a state of defilement. This would 224
"spoil their gun." When they go to attend the burial of a relative, 784
they fire a shot upon reaching the mortuary village. Thus the
ball which was in the gun at the time of the relative's death will be
expelled ; was it not contaminated? Moreover the hunter will
wash his gun ; without these precautions the weapon would not
kill anything in future.

These maphisa are very jealous of each other. Some of them 224
try to destroy the power of a rival by securing a part of an animal 789
killed by him ; they subject the meat to a treatment which was not
explained to me ; they then bury for instance a bone thus smeared ;
after which they are convinced that their rival will no longer be
able to dispute game with them. Therefore when a hunter
distributes meat to other people, he keeps for himself a little piece
of each limb in order to prevent a possible enemy from "going
away with his meat."

Let me now pass in review the *more important kinds of big game*, 224
and I will reproduce as literally as possible the information gathered
from Thongas of all parts of the country with regard to each of
them. Some of my readers, upon reading these extraordinary
statements, will no doubt exclaim : "What does all this mean?
Are these actual facts or pure imagination or folklore?" All
three elements are certainly represented in these stories, but
I think it would be useless to take much trouble to distinguish
between the three. My endeavour is not to produce a scientific
zoological treatise but to find in these accounts a means of penetrating
more deeply i[illegible] Bantu mentality ; and there is no doubt that
the study of hunting rites has a great deal to teach us on this
subject.

The *eland* (*mhofu*, Oreas canna) is a splendid beast, highly 224
coveted but dangerous to kill. Viguet says : "It possesses the 825
nuru. When you kill it, it is taboo to walk round its body. Go
straight to its head, and there, in the hair of the forehead, you will
find a louse ; take it. Then dig in the earth where the head has
fallen : you will find a root tehre ; cut it off and bring it home
together with the louse. Then you are safe!" (—Other people add :
"Remove its eye before cutting it open, if you wish to escape the

224
825 water, and Natives point to them saying: "The mapseko!" *Pseko* is the name given to old pots employed in connection with the cooking operations (to cook, ku pseka); they are turned upside down in the fire-place and the pots containing the food are placed on top of them. The backs of the hippopotami are like these inverted old black pots and that is why these animals are called after them. It would be dangerous to call them by their own name; they might become angry if they knew that they had been noticed...

224
789 I owe to Mboza a graphic description of the rules of hippopotamus hunting. There are a few villages, near the Nkomati or other rivers, whose inhabitants are regular hippopotamus hunters, and possess the special science, or art, called *butimba*; the hunters themselves are called *batimba*. This science is hereditary: it is taught by the father to his sons. These men possess a peculiar drug, the *mbanguluwa*; when the hunter is inoculated with this, he acquires a special power over the hippopotami: should he wound one of them, the beast will not be able to go very far, and it will be possible to follow it and quickly find it. But this inoculation makes the man very dangerous to his fellows: should he beat any one, that person will be at once seized by a disease which will prevent his passing water or stools.

224
835 This is the manner in which these batimba hunt. During the day, the hunter fishes, watching the movements of the hippopotami all the time. When he sees that the propitious moment has come and is ready to undertake hunting operations lasting a month, he first calls his own daughter to his hut and has sexual relations with her. This incestuous act, which is strongly taboo in ordinary life, has made him into a "murderer": he has killed something at home; he has acquired the courage necessary for doing great deeds on the river! Henceforth he will have no sexual relations with his wives during the whole campaign.

224
[789] Before starting he calls his principal wife, the one to whose care the butimba magic drug is committed, and both expose their bodies to the smoke of a medicinal pill. On the same night,

immediately after these acts, he sets off with his sons ; they close 224
the drift where the beasts leave the river by placing a canoe across the track. The hippopotami are in the neighbouring forest, busy feeding, and perhaps ravaging the fields. When they return to the river, they stop in front of the canoe which obstructs their retreat : the first assagai is then thrown at them. It has been smeared over with the Strophantus powder. The animal rushes into the water ; when it reappears on the other side, it is pierced by a second assagai. These assagais are arranged in such a way that the blade, which is provided with hooks at the sides, is not firmly fixed to the handle ; moreover a long string is twined round the handle connecting it with the blade. So, when the hippopotamus enters the river, the assagai which is planted in its skin is separated from the handle, which remains floating and acts as a buoy ; the string unwinds and the handle follows the animal as it retreats, showing in which direction it has gone.

As soon as the assagai is thrown, somebody runs to the hunter's 224
village to inform his wife. The woman must at once shut herself 784
up in the hut and remain perfectly quiet. She lights a fire and 789 ●
keeps it burning the whole time. A little child brings her her pipe
(old Ronga women are great pipe smokers). She must neither [276]
eat nor drink ; or, if she is very thirsty, the child will bring her some water. In any case she must not crush her mealies; she must not go out of the hut except to satisfy her natural wants. Why ? Because if she were to move to and fro in the village, this would induce the hippopotamus to rush wildly upon her husband and possibly kill him. Moreover the fact that she remains confined within the circular walls of the hut will have as a consequence that the wild beast will be in some sort imprisoned in a small space ; it will not be able to run far away and escape.

We find here a characteristic instance of the two kinds of magic which we shall explain later on : the communionist magic according to which the different parts of a whole act and react on each other (the great wife, whose life is in close connection with her husband's life, saves him by her quiet demeanour) and the imitative magic according to which like acts on like or produces like (the confinement of the woman within the

224 walls of the hut prevents the hippopotamus from escaping from the
784 circle formed by the canoes on the river. (Similar customs are found
789 amongst many primitive peoples. See Part VI. Ch. I.)

224 Then all the hunters of the village are called ; they enter the canoe and follow the beast. To facilitate the pursuit, they replace the floating handle of the assagai by a *male*, viz., the big nervule of the leaf of the mimale palm tree, resembling a pole of 30 feet in length. As soon as this species of pole is fixed, somebody informs the woman at home that she can come out of the hut. But let her be prudent, as victory is not yet won. The hippopotamus will come to the surface to breathe : an assagai will be thrown into its nostrils and later a second ; it will be no longer able to close its nose when plunging and will be drowned. But it may attack the hunters furiously, instigated by the spirits of baloyi (wizards) which are riding on it "just as men ride on a horse!" The fight will perhaps last a long time!

When the hippopotamus has at last been killed, songs of rejoicing burst out on all sides ; the hunters bring their canoes together and row in the direction of the village, singing the whole time special songs which are called *nyangamela*. The peculiar cries of the women are heard on the hill, their "mikulungwana." They come to the shore to meet the men. The great wife, having now been entirely set free, comes dancing and singing. The carcase is left on the sand till low tide (the tide is perceptible for a long distance in the Lower Nkomati river). Then all the hunters assemble to proceed to the two great hunters' rites, the lurulula and the luma.

First the *lurulula*. I have obtained a more precise description of this rite from two new informants. The beast is laid on its back, and its forelegs are pulled out on both sides, so as to separate them from each other. The hunter who has killed the beast takes his *ndjao* root, chews it, together with the butimba medicine, blows pieces of it into his hands, closes his eyes and introduces himself, creeping on his belly, between the forelegs ; he then creeps along the side of the hippopotamus, anointing it with the medicine which is in his hands. When he reaches the hindleg, he squeezes it with both hands, does the same to the other hindleg, creeps

is used by mourners hanging on the reeds where the hippopotamus had 825
been cut open. These people had put them there to mourn their 539
hippopotamus. As regards the hunter, he was given a reward of £ 6." 791

Second story. "A phisa called Shitjobeke from Matlotlo was called and shown where the hippopotamus used to emerge from the river. He went there during the night and saw its master on its back. He told him: 'So it is your hippopotamus which ravages the gardens. Hold it firm! I am going to kill it.' The wizard answered: 'I beseech you, Khosa, do not kill it; I will not come any more to spoil the mealies!' The hunter let him go and went away. Next evening the animal came out again, its master on its back. The hunter possessed a drug by which he could kindle the lights on the back of the hippopotamus. He saw the wizard and said: 'My friend, now hold it fast. I am firing! If you do not hold it I will kill you.' He fired and the master went away. The hunter remained on the spot fearing that the wizard might come back and resuscitate it. Next day he told the chiefs to come and cut it open. He performed the lurulula; he blew his ndjao over the legs, the [789] ●
belly, the chest, and the ears; then they turned the beast over on the other side, and he did the same thing. They cut off the tail and gave it to him: the hunter uses this as a medicine; he will mix it with other drugs and this will help him against the wizards; they will no longer be able to come to him during the night and make him dream of hippopotami; it will also give him the power of killing other hippopotami. Then they cooked the meat of the chest, which is a tit-bit. The divinatory bones showed who was to roast it and eat the first mouthful and then distribute their portions to the others. The bones often say also: 'If it is the meat of a male hippopotamus do not eat it in the village, eat it at such and such a place...'"

Third story. "There was another hunter, Mundjindji, of the Nyoka clan. His father had been killed by Heaven (lightning), because he possessed charms which he had got from the Ba-Sutho. This man used to dig up the corpses of the dead; he dissected the skin of their foreheads and killed, (with the drugs thus obtained,) the boys who came back from the mines (magaisa). The Commandant (Portuguese Administrator) arrested him, and he was imprisoned in Lourenço Marques. He said: 'They are telling lies about me,' and he was released. However he killed some more people and was imprisoned for one month. Even now he is still doing it. He is a 'phisa.' They called him in to get rid of a hippopotamus which was annoying them. It was the Commandant who called him. He went to hunt it. For many

301 Beads are merely an ornament and have no ritual v[illegible]xcept
789 the large white ones used by people possessed by the Ba-Ndjao spirits. (Part VI.)

B. HABITATION.

342 While there has been such a rapid change in Thonga customs regarding dress, — so rapid that in these last fifty years they have changed more in that respect than during the fifty preceding centuries —, in the field of architecture the tribe appears to have stood still ; their huts are built precisely as they were in ancient times. It is true that it is easier to put on a jacket and trousers than to alter the style of one's house : besides it must be admitted that the Thonga hut possesses several advantages. It is comparatively easy to construct, cool in the hot weather, perfectly watertight in the rainy season and is fairly ingeniously contrived.

That which is called *yindlu* (yin-tin) properly speaking, is more especially the *roof* of the hut (lwango, dji-ma) ; for it is the roof which is the most troublesome to make. A strange fact too, and one which appears paradoxical, is that, in the construction (ku yaka) of the house, they begin with the roof!

[341]
335
342
The Thonga architect — and every man is his own in that country — gathers together a few hundred straight sticks, one to one and a half inches in width and from three to ten feet in length. He digs a hole in the ground, a yard and a half in diameter and 16 inches deep, in which he arranges his sticks in a circle, points downwards, at the bottom of the hole, and supported in such a manner that they lie at an angle of 45 degrees with the ground. Any one of these sticks will thus be at about a right angle with the opposite one, and all together they form, as it were, a huge conical basket with its point in the hole. To fasten all the sticks together, he ties them to round hoops (something like cask hoops) made of bent branches. These hoops (balelo, dji-ma) are concentric, very small at the bottom, and getting gradually larger as the work progresses. Any spaces which remain between the sticks first arranged are filled up, one after the other, with

and five tens, and three tens, and five, and two. This system of numeration is clearly decimal, and is in direct relation with the ten fingers of the hands ; this is proved by the fact that, when counting, Natives generally use their fingers. They start with the little finger of the left hand, *one* ; then the little finger and the third finger, *two* ; these two and the second, *three* ; these three and the index, *four* ; these four and the thumb, *five* ; they then add the fingers of the right hand, beginning with the thumb : five plus one, five plus two, five plus three, five plus four. *Ten* is shown by clapping both hands ; notice that five, the left hand with the thumb separated from the four other fingers, imitates the Roman sign of V, and ten, the two hands joined, with the fingers crossing each other, make an X, the Roman sign for 10! This shows that our system of numbers, of which we are justly proud, probably began in the same way as amongst most of the Bantu tribes! 802

On the other hand it must be said that, if this system has not reached a higher development, the cause lies in the fact that Thongas do not wish, or do not *take the trouble* to deal with high figures. They very soon declare that a number is : "tjandjabahlayi (Dj.) or hlulabakonti (Ro.)" viz., "the one which passes the capacity of reckoners." When Gungunyana made a raid into the Ntimane district and stole the oxen there, his men tried to count the cattle, but, having experienced much difficulty in the operation, they said to their king : "It is tjandjabahlayi!" — "They are innumerable!" There were a few hundreds of them (1).

More than that! Bantus have not attained to *any precision* in counting the hours of the day, for instance, because there was no necessity for doing so in the primitive state. Consider how greatly our habit of always consulting our watches has contributed to create a sense of precision in us and to introduce it into our lives. For the Bantus, the sun is the only watch, and that great time-keeper is all sufficient for them. Do they wish to make an appointment for the following day? They point to a place in the 805

(1) As regards *counting men*, in former times this was positively prohibited. If any one, seeing a throng assembled on the hubo, wanted to know the number of people present, they would say to him : "What! You are counting us? Whom do you want to do away with?" (Shana wa hi akonta, u ta hi pumba na?) 802 78[illegible]

meaning than tra-la-la) "They are starving at Ntimane, siloyi..." 533
He was journeying from the Ntimane country, near Khosen, and
having heard that the crops had failed, went muttering this great
news all down the river! Perhaps the song was not of his own
composition, but was an old refrain which had been preserved on
account of its catching tune.

Mrs Audéoud, during her long journeys on the Maputju river, [461]
noted down many of the tunes, Nos. 19-22, some in two or even
three parts, curiously harmonised. The Native sailors seek in
this way to vary the monotony of rowing, punting or towing the
boat. No doubt a great many more such tunes could be collected.

VII. *Incantations.*

Children, as we saw, (I. p. 68), are fond of singing curious little melodies to various animals : to the big *galagala* lizard, to the *chameleon*, to the *crab* with one claw, to the *owl*. The tune of the words addressed to the owl is No. 36.[1] The boys of Rikatla used to salute our ox-waggon, when it appeared on the plain, with song No. 35[1]: "Gweymanâo! — here are the oxen", they said running all round the span, the girls following them and lifting up the babies in their arms, to show them the strange machine and the long-horned oxen walking slowly, with impassive looks, through the little black throng.

Incantations of a more serious type are the *songs of exorcism*, 533
performed to the accompaniment of rattles, big tins and drums, 789
close to the ears of the person supposed to be possessed, in order
to induce the spirit to reveal its name and to " come out". No. 37[1]
is one of the most celebrated songs of this category, and has really
a great deal of character. I shall speak of it again when dealing
with possession.

VIII. *Songs accompanying tales and games.*

As we shall see, little songs are very frequently introduced 533
into the tales to embellish them, and are generally repeated 538
three or four times over, as if the narrator wished to exhaust

[1] [Errata: read 31 for 36; read 30 for 35, read 32 for 37.--Analyst]

I never heard a distinction made between fixed stars and 821
planets. They are all called tinyeleti. The best-known is 772
Venus, which bears many names. Not knowing that the evening 881
and morning star are one and the same, they have given it different names. The evening star is *Gumbashilalelo*, the one which steals the evening meal, because it appears when people are eating it, or *khwekhweti*, the brilliant star, or *Nkata wa hweti*, the moon's husband (as the two are often seen close together); the morning star is called *Ngongomela*, or *Khwezu*, and is greatly lauded as the herald of day. It gives the warriors the signal for starting on a war-like expedition: the warriors can easily kill their enemies under cover of the darkness, and the sun will soon appear and help them to complete their victory. Travellers also start on their journey when they see it: the dawn will soon be here! Lit by its light, candidates for circumcision leave the village of the chief to go to the house of initiation. According to one of my informants (I. p. 75) there is a profound and mystic idea in this custom: Ngongomela announces the day; so little boys must be conducted by the morning star when they abandon their childhood and all its ignorance to enter the adult life with all its knowledge. It leads them from darkness into the light! So Venus plays a great part in Thonga customs. It is the great star. Notice the feminine suffix *eti* in one of its names. It may have been personified in former times.

The *Pleiades* are the only constellation which bears a name 821
in Thonga. They call it *shirimelo*, the one which announces 772
the tilling season, because, in fact, in the lands situated in the Tropic of Cancer, it rises in July or August, when tilling is resumed. I have not heard of any other constellation known to the Natives. They have no notion whatever of constellations: their mind does not seem to have tried to group the stars, or to have seen figures of animals, or objects, in the sky; their imagination in this domain is very poor, and they remain far behind the Oriental nations in this respect.

Falling stars are looked on as a bad omen. When they see 821
one falling towards a certain point of the horizon, Natives think 787
that a Chief must have died in the country towards which the 787

821 star is directing its course, and they have a formula of incantation
787 to get rid of the misfortune attending this phenomenon. They
say: "Thu! Thu! Nkulunkulu ndjuwee, famba psa ku u nga fa u
789 ku bi." — "You great thing, go away alone (without me, leaving me behind) and die and disappear entirely." This is more an imprecation (shiruketelo) than an incantation. The syllable *thu* indicates, and accompanies, the emission of a little saliva. It is different from the sacramental *tsu*, employed to invoke the spirits of the ancestors: it is an insult. It is spitting *at* something, not an act of respect and an offering, like *tsu* (1). This is the Ronga formula; the one used in Northern clans has the same meaning: "*Rura, rura weshe*" (Move, move alone!).

821 *Comets* greatly impress the imagination of the Thongas;
787 they are called *shimusana*, or *nyeleti ya musana*, the star of dust, or *nyeleti ya nkila*, the star with a tail, and when they appear they also mean the death of a chief. People say: "See! A chief has died, but they have not yet published the mourning" (I. p. 414). The star which is said to have appeared the year of the death of Manukosi was probably a comet. (See Report of the S.A.A.A.S. 1905, Vol. III, p. 232.)

772 These few superstitions and observations comprise all the Astronomy of the Thongas. The sidereal world is almost entirely outside the range of their preoccupations.

III. *Cosmographic and Meteorological Phenonomena.*

1) THE WIND.

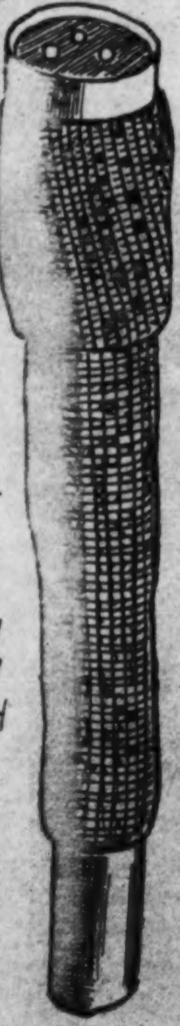
821 The wind is called *moya*, an interesting word which means
822 also spirit (the human breath and the spiritual part of man), and is applied to the acting, living agent, or to the smell, or taste, of some objects. For instance it is said of an alcoholic beverage

---

861 (1) They spit at a child who is causing an unpleasant smell, saying to him: "Thu!
578 u ya tinyela matjimba." — "Go away to ease yourself." Should you do this to a person older than yourself, he will say to you: "What! you make *thu* to me (wa ndji tjhuka), you want me to ease myself!"

821 which had caused the flash of lightning, and flies away back to
825 the mountains. The magician who understands the "treatment
791 of Heaven" comes and digs at the spot ; there he
finds a kind of gelatinous substance which solidifies
after a little time. I possess a little of this curious
drug given to me by a Pedi magician, by name
Mudjumi ; it resembles a piece of chalk, and is
considered very valuable on account of its rareness,
and because it is used in the manufacture of the
wonderful medicine of Heaven. Should a village
have been struck by lightning, the magician of
Heaven will come and dig out this foreign body ;
if he finds it, the taboo is removed. If he does
not, the whole village must move to another place.
821 In the same way, it is taboo to warm oneself at a fire
372 made of the wood of a tree that has been struck
by lightning, or to use it as fuel.

Happily this dreadful bird can be prevented
825 from killing and burning by magical means. Both
778 the Pedi Mudjumi and the Thonga Makasane
534 possessed the enchanted flute, by which they could
●789 force Heaven — or the bird of Heaven — to spare
824 them. Mudjumi having sold me his flute, I can
describe it at length. It is made of a hollow bone
five inches long, covered with Varan skin, filled at
its larger extremity with a black substance like
wax. Inside, to keep it clean, there is a vulture's
feather. The bone is said to have been taken from
the ndlati bird ; the wax substance was made from
powder obtained by drying up and pulverising a
little of the heart, the eye, the bones, the feathers,
and the flesh of the bird. In the wax are embedded three seeds of Abrus precatorius, the
"lucky bean" well-known in South Africa, a
round seed of a splendid coral colour with a black
spot, very much used in Thonga magic. This addition of Abrus
precatorius intensifies the sound of the flute and enables it to
reach heaven.



The flute of Heaven.

Drawn by J. Wavre.

reach heaven. The magician, seeing the thunderstorm approaching, 821
climbs up the hill without any fear, blows in his flute : psee... 791
psee... psee..., and shouts : "You! Heaven! Go further! I have 789
nothing against you! I do not fight against you!" He may add in a threatening tone : "If you are sent by my enemies against me, I will cut you open with this knife of mine." The thunderstorm will then pass away!

This invocation to Heaven is curious, and we shall better understand 821
it when studying the part played by Heaven in Thonga religion. Here I am merely considering the superstition as an attempt at explaining a natural phenomenon. And we may well ask : how is it possible for such absurdities to be believed, and firmly believed, by men who are not at all devoid of a sense of observation? The idea that lightning is a bird comes perhaps from the fact that its movements in falling from above resemble the evolutions of a bird in the air. After all the phenomenon is so sudden that this explanation could easily be accepted by the imagination of the savage. As regards the statements about the coagulated urine of the bird, I must admit that I was unable to understand on what they could be based, until I saw some samples of fulgurites found where lightning had struck the ground ; the heat of the electric current vitrifies the sand, forming a kind of pipe, which enters the soil, where it ramifies to a certain depth. These fulgurites, though not perfectly answering to the description given by Native magicians, may have been the natural substratum upon which Bantu imagination built up all the other superstitions.

5) THE PROBLEM OF RAIN AND THE WAY THONGAS DEAL WITH IT.

All over the earth the question of rainfall is of primary 132
importance, but this is especially the case in Subtropical Africa, 731
even more than anywhere else. Rain may not fall during seven 789
months, from April to October, and nobody worries about it. But if it fails in November and December, at the beginning of the rainy season, it is a dreadful misfortune, a calamity more serious

132 than any other. The life of every individual, and consequently
731 of the whole clan, is threatened. Famine will certainly follow,
789 as cereals can only be sown during these two months and famine means not only suffering and anguish, but often death, in a primitive tribe which is totally ignorant of trade with out-lying countries, and does not possess any means of conveyance for food bought in other lands. No wonder therefore that the imagination of the South African Native has invented ways and means of regularising the rainfall, and that rites, and charms, and all the powers of magic have been resorted to with a view to ensuring the precious rain to the tribe at the right time.

789 These methods may be classified in two categories: the rites which aim at removing the causes which are believed to prevent rain and the charms by which the rain is made to fall, irrespective of any preventing cause.

a) *The causes which prevent rainfall and the rites by which they are removed.*

821 The general view is that rain comes *from the gods*: "Psikwembu
789 psi nisa mpfula" — "the spirits of the ancestors cause rain to fall."
782 So, should the spring showers not come in due time, the first idea will be to offer a sacrifice to the ancestor-gods, especially if the bones consulted have revealed that the anger of the gods is the real
[533] cause. Men will go to the sacred wood where the ancestors have been buried, sing there an ancient mourning song (I suppose No. 15, page 286, is used for the purpose), and some of them will beat the graves with sticks. As regards the sacrifice, it consists of a black victim, or it may even be the offering of a living human being to the gods; these rites will be described later on.

Or it may be that a certain individual, *a wizard*, endowed with magical power, or rather possessing enchanted drugs, prevents the rain from falling (a siba mpfula) through wickedness, or hatred of his countrymen. This is a rarer occurrence.

100 But the terrible calamity of drought is brought into direct

But the terrible calamity of drought is brought into direct
relation with some physiological phenomena which no one would 789
have thought of in this connection : the miscarriage of women 821
when the foetus has not been dealt with according to rule, the 843
birth of twins, the death of children not yet received into the tribe 845
by the ceremony of *boha puri* (I. p. 56) and not buried in wet 766
ground ; these are the great natural causes which prevent rain 171
from falling! I have met with this conception all over the
Thonga tribe. I found it also amongst the Pedis of the Transvaal, who firmly believe it, and it would be most interesting to
know if Suthos, Zulus, and Hottentots have the same superstitions. Let me quote the *ipsissima verba* of Mankhelu, the great 789
medicine-man of the Nkuna Court. I shall never forget the 821
earnest tone of his voice, his deep conviction, when he uttered 843
to me the following words, as a kind of revelation : "When a 783
woman has had a miscarriage, when she has let her blood flow secretly and has buried the abortive child in an unknown place, it is enough to make the burning winds blow, and to dry up all the land : the rain can no longer fall, because the country is no longer right (tiko a ra ha lulami). Rain fears that spot. It must stop at that very place and can go no further. This woman has been very guilty. She has spoilt the country of the chief, because she has hidden blood which had not yet properly united to make a human being. That blood is taboo! What she has done is taboo. It causes starvation."

"What then must be done?" — "The chief will collect his men and ask them : 'Are you in a normal state?' (lit. are you right?). They answer : 'Such and such a woman was pregnant but nobody knows what she has brought forth.' This woman will be arrested and told to go and show us where she has put it. The earth is dug up ; the hole is sprinkled with a decoction made of two drugs prepared in a special pot, the *mbendula* and *nyangale* ; the woman herself must wash her body every day with that medicine. Then a little of the earth taken from the hole will be scraped up and thrown into the river ; water drawn from the river will be poured into the hole : the country will be well again, and then the rain will come.

"Moreover, we, the medicine-men, after having sent old

789 women to the river to throw away the contaminated earth, order
821 them to make a ball of that earth, and to bring it back to us in
843 the early morning. We grind it, we put it into a pot where it
783 must remain for five days, and then we prepare the great drug to sprinkle the land. The medicine is put into oxen horns and they go to all the drifts, to the boundaries of the country, on the borders of the Ňwebeti and of the Thabina rivers, on the road to Sibila's country, to Diskop (Leydsdorp); they must not however cross rivers. Our neighbours do the same on their own side. One of the girls digs the earth, the others dip a stick into the horn and sprinkle the drug into the hole. We also sprinkle the road on which these women have trodden, when they had their blood; we remove the misfortune caused by these women on the roads. The country is pure again. Rain can fall."

This is the purifying rite in the Nkuna clan. Mankhelu asserts that the Pedis do the same. He did not know if the custom existed amongst other Thonga clans. But Viguet described the same custom to me as being in force on the borders of the Limpopo, under the name of *mbelele*. The bones having revealed that the country is impure, the chief orders the mbelele: it is a period of mourning (nkosi) for the land. First the *phokolo*, or sacrifice of the black victim is performed (See Part VI). Then the women assemble. They must remove all their clothing, only putting some grass round their loins and, with a peculiar skipping step, singing a special song: "Mpfula nana" — "rain fall," — they go to all the spots where children prematurely born have been buried in dry ground, on the hills, take away what they find in the broken pots and collect all that impure matter in a secret place, so that children may see nothing of what they are doing. Water is poured on these graves in order to "quench them (timula)." On the evening of the same day they go and bury these impurities; this is
[783 done in the mud, near the river. No man must approach during
831] this operation: the women would have the right to strike the imprudent one and ask him questions on the obscene formulae of circumcision; the man would answer in the most impure words he could find, as all language taboos are suspended on that day; nakedness even is no longer taboo, "because," says Viguet,

"it is the law of the country!" Every one consents to the suspen- [183
sion of the ordinary laws! (1) 831

Amongst the Rongas, I did not hear of any connection between 789
prematurely born children and rain. When the mbelele rite is 821
performed, a mother of twins must lead the procession of women
who draw water and pour it on the graves of the twins in order to 843
secure the rain. They also clean all the wells (kuha tinhlobo), 783
digging them afresh and removing any filth in the water. It may 845
be that the corpse of a twin, if it has been buried in dry ground, will be dug out of its grave and buried again near the river, or they will go in procession and pour water on the grave. This will influence Heaven, which is killing the earth by the terrible heat of the sun. The burning October winds will cease and the rain will fall.

There is something mysterious about all these customs. Considered merely as ideas regarding Nature and natural phenomena, I believe their essential meaning to be this : — there are some cases of human birth which are taboo. While any birth is taboo, owing to the lochia, that of children prematurely born is doubly dangerous. Abnormal children, such as twins, children who have died before the "boha puri" rite (I. p. 56), in some clans also children who cut their upper teeth first, share this noxious character. They are a calamity for the whole land as they are connected with the mysterious power of Heaven, and so prevent the rain from falling. The great remedy for the evil, the only means of counteracting this influence, is to bury these children in wet ground. Should this not have been done, the chief must order these little corpses to be exhumed and buried near the river : this is the aim and object of the mbelele. If wet, these graves will cause no harm (2).

How did these extraordinary conceptions first originate ? 000

---

(1) This rite of *mbelele* shows striking analogies with the Passage rites which we have 766
already often met with in Thonga customs. This is a special period, a mourning period
for the land, says Viguet, a marginal period which, as such, is accompanied by 783
obscene manifestations, both in speech and in absence of clothing.

(2) In the Maluleke clan, as previously mentioned, these three categories of children 789
must be *cremated*, and foreigners dying in the midst of the clan are also burnt after 821
their death, from fear that they might belong to one of these categories and so prevent
the rain from falling, if they were buried in dry ground. The mbelele rite there is called 183
nkelenkele. Rangane describes it as follows : — Women collect the bones of twins,

845 What is the connection between abnormal births of human
772 beings and the rain-fall? I think it can be found in the
781 conception of Heaven which has inspired so many curious rites,
and which I shall explain in the next chapter. So it is possible
that, after all, the mbelele rite has a religious idea at its base.

b) *Rain charms.*

789 The removal of the corpses of abnormal children from dry
177 ground and their burial near the river probably sometimes proves ineffective to produce rain. So Bantu magicians have invented a great many charms to obtain the greatly desired showers, and the power of the rain-makers is enormous. Our tribe does not seem to have developed this art as much as others. The Sutho-Pedis are masters in this domain and Mankhelu, who had been taught by them and had become a great and renowned rain-maker, revealed all his secrets to me. He possessed the drug and used it frequently, he said, having often been called in by Sutho chiefs dwelling in far distant districts, as far off as Pretoria. He assured me that he had met with so much success that these chiefs had given him oxen, horses, a waggon, precious beads, etc.! Where had he found this marvellous drug? At Rivimbi (in Venda : Luvimbi), a country north of Spelonken, not far from the Limpopo and to which he went, as far as I could make out, in 1865 or 1866. The Luvimbi people are the descendants of Luvimbi, (1) a chief of the old times (as old as Nkuna, says Mankhelu) who, after his death, went to heaven and became king of heaven ; he still exists there as a spirit, hearing and knowing everything that is done on earth. This Luvimbi is probably the same whom the Vendas call the first man, and concerning whom they have a number of traditions which I shall mention a little later.

776 and those of still-born children or those who died at birth; to these they add their old
rags (perhaps the cloths used for their menses?); they bring all these impurities to the
783 cross-ways and *burn them* there, singing impure songs, saying: "To-day is a great day!
789 There is no taboo any more! If you prohibit anything, it will be an insult to the rain;
it will not fall." The smoke of all that they have burnt constitutes a religious offering:
821 now the country will be pure and the rain will fall. The conception prevailing among
183 the Malulekes is somewhat different from that of the Rongas.

(1) I have published an account of the Venda traditions connected with Luvimbi or Raluvimbi in *The S. A Journal of Science*, April 1921, where more details will be found concerning this personage.

which I shall mention a little later. They all invoke him to obtain rain, asserts Mankhelu, even Modjadji, the great queen who has acquired such fame : she does not pretend to be superior to Luvimbi ; she owes her rain-making power to him! His successors have kept the famous recipe for rainmaking. Mankhelu visited them. He brought with him "bukosi," viz., riches, and they gave him horns full of the drug. One of them is in my possession ; it seems to be the horn of a he-goat. These people manufacture the rain-producing medicine on an extensive scale. Baskets are seen in their huts, full of the ingredients of which it is composed. Strange to say, these ingredients all come *from the sea* ; as far as I could identify them from Mankhelu's description, they are : sea-urchins, (shinana sha mitwa), sea-weeds (pindja ra lwandle, lit. rope of the sea), bones of whales, or sea-fish, bivalve sea-shells, pieces of wood from wrecked vessels run aground, etc. All these are roasted and, when the process is sufficiently advanced, sea-water is poured on them to cool them (timula). They are then pulverised and "salted" with another drug called "shinyuke," something black which I could not identify. The powder so obtained is put into the horns, half of which are dipped into sheep's fat and so become female drugs. Having been given the four horns, two male and two female, Mankhelu was told that these would retain their virtue for ever ; when he saw that their contents were nearly finished, he could always prepare a fresh supply by roasting marine products, but he would have to grind a little of the original drug with the new powder in order to *pfusha*, viz., to raise its strength, according to the universal practice of Bantu medicine-men. The original drug is the well-spring (shihlobo). Should any one try to manufacture the drug himself, using exactly the same ingredients, he would meet with total failure, as the virtue of the drug is derived from two sources : the produce of the sea, and the power of the first inventor, Luvimbi.

Having returned with the precious charm, when summoned by any chief to act as rain-maker, Mankhelu employed it in the following way.

He first asked the chief to kill a black goat or sheep (a he-goat, or a ram, if the bones said so) ; the head, at any rate, had

789 to be black. The heart was pierced with a puncheon and the blood flowed. He carefully washed the horns with the blood and smeared them later on (horola) with the "psanyi" found in the intestines of the animal. Then he took his *ntsiko*, viz., the two pieces of wood which served as his flint, poured a little of the powder into the notch of the female stick and made fire by the rapid friction described on p. 34. In the meantime Mankhelu prayed as follows : "Here are the drugs, Rivimbi of Tsome (Rivimbi's father)! Give us rain." Then he invoked his own gods, saying : "Go to Rivimbi for me and come along here all of you to make the rain fall." This performance is a "mhamba," a means of calling the gods, especially Rivimbi, "the master of this mhamba." After a while the wood began to burn ; leaves of the "nembe-nembe" bush (Cassia petersiana) were placed on it and a black smoke rose and ascended to heaven. Then the clouds appeared and soon the thunderstorm broke. A feather of the ndlati bird of lightning was placed amongst the leaves as a protection against thunderbolts.

Mankhelu was absolutely convinced of the efficacy of this means of rain-making, and there seems to be more sense in this rite than in many others. To use the sea to cause rain to
[821] fall, is not after all so absurd! I would not assert that Natives have a clear idea as to the formation of clouds, *mapapa* (Dj.), *matlabi* (Ro.), and know that the water from above comes from the water below, but at any rate they know that the sea is water and rain is
[822] also water. To obtain rain by smoke rising from burning sea products is a procedure which is in keeping with one of the most common beliefs of primitive man, that like produces like, a belief which has found its expression in the famous principle of the old physicians : "Similia similibus curantur."

When practising his rain-making art at home, Mankhelu proceeded with less ceremonial pomp. After having consulted his bones, he took four leaves of the tjeke plant (p. 14), smeared them with the magical powder and exposed them to the rays of the burning sun. As soon as these leaves were fully dry, "Heaven began to roar" and the rain came.

[177] The great rain medicine is of Pedi or Venda origin. In addition

In addition
to the sacrifice of the black victim and to the mbelele rite of 789
purification of the land, which are characteristic Thonga customs, 823
it seems that another old Thonga way of obtaining rain was the 775
tjeba fishing which I described on p. 86. When the whole clan had gone to catch the barbels in the almost dried up ponds, a thunderstorm would come and rain would fall. This was especially the case with certain small lakes such as Malangotiba in Nondwane, and that in Nsime near Morakwen, because battles had taken place on their borders and the enemies' corpses had been thrown into the water. So these lakes had become "great sacred woods" (ntimu). I suppose the spirits of the deceased, which were certainly "gods of bitterness," (see next chapter), were supposed to prevent the rain, and the *tjeba* either appeased them or made them powerless.

To sum up this very complicated subject, I would say rain 789
rites belong to three different categories: 1) The religious rites 769
connected with ancestor worship (black offering, visit to the 783
sacred woods, old songs and sometimes offering of a human victim). 2) Rites of purification of the land, those which are derived from the mysterious relations established between the power of Heaven and abnormal births (mbelele, cleaning of wells by women accompanied by the mother of twins); these present some features of the ordinary passage rites, either because the fall of rain inaugurates a new season, or because drought is a calamity comparable with death and attended with contamination. 3) The magic rites, in which sea charms play the most important part.

Hail, shihangu (Dj.), mabyana, lit. little stones (Ro.), is frequent 132
in Thongaland; according to Mboza, it is not the object of any peculiar superstitions. Amongst the Pedis the day on which it has fallen must be kept as a sabbath. It is taboo to till the fields on that day.

IV. *The Inorganic World.*

Water is called *mati*, a noun of the bu-ma class, the class of 193
liquids, employed only in the plural form. Notice the suffix *ti*, which seems to show that, at a period when mythological

193 conceptions were still current, it was considered as a feminine principle. This supposition is confirmed by the fact that *rivers* (nambu. pl. milambu) also have the feminine termination (I. p. 36, Note). I find the following names of rivers ending in *ti* : Nkomati, Nfoloti (Umbelosi), Ñwebeti, Shalati, Timbati ; the termination *etsi*, *edzi*, may be another form of the same suffix (Ñwanetsi, Ntsatsi, Shingwedzi, Madzi, etc.). A very curious fact, which shows the same conception, is that the river which crosses the territory of the Tembe clan is called Mi-Tembe. I first thought this to be a plural form of the mu-mi class ; but it is more natural to explain this *mi* as the feminine prefix (1) which means daughter of, as Migogwe, etc. (I. p. 352).

823 *Crossing rivers* is subject to a curious rule. It is taboo to bathe
784 in the stream before crossing it ; taboo also for the traveller to
824 cook his food on the hither side of the river ; he must first cross,
and then take his meal. This rule is still universally observed by
789 waggon trekkers in South Africa. In this case there may be a
133 reason for the taboo : South African rivers are apt to be swollen in
a moment by sudden rain, and the crossing made impossible for days : the traveller therefore makes haste ; he will have plenty of time to stop on the other side! When the river is dangerous, a Thonga will first chew (phora) a little of his *ndjao*, the root of a juncus, which is supposed to increase courage and to ensure victory over hostile influences. (See Part VI.)

823 Some *Lakes* and *Rivers* are believed to be inhabited by spirits,
769 but not in the ordinary fetichistic way, in which a special spiritual
776 being is incorporated with the natural object ; these spirits are
psikwembo, spirits of the deceased ancestors of the owners of the
782 land, and are propitiated by their descendants. Should another
clan have invaded the territory where these lakes are, and crocodiles threaten the fishermen, (p. 88) they will call some one belonging to the clan of the old possessors of the country and ask him to make an offering to appease *his* gods. This is the ordinary course, and the more closely we search the more completely these lake and

---

(1) A number of river names have the prefix *li* or *ri*, especially those which are of Sutho origin : Lebvubye. Ritabi (Letaba) Ritshindjele (Letsitele), Rimbelule (Lepalula, Olifant). Others begin with *ñwa*, *ma*, and may be ancient names of men.

aculeata, which runs on the sand, *Shipyindji* or *Shihonokamahlo*, 136
the one which gazes at you ; the large gheko, Agama atricollis, 825
with a head of which the grey colour can change into blue,
Galagala or *Phululu* (dji-ma) (I. p. 173) the grey one, which hides
itself in dark places, in hollow stems or under roofs is the *Hokokwana*
(dji-ma) (Hemidactylus grenatus) ; it is said that when this
lizard sucks at the breast of a human being, it is impossible to
remove it, and the only means of getting rid of it is to go and
suckle a dog!

But the most curious lizard of these countries, that which most 136
strikes the Native imagination is the Chameleon (Chameleon 825
Petersii), *Lumpfana* (dji-ma). Herd boys throw ground tobacco 789
into its mouth to avenge themselves for the bad turn it did mankind
when it lingered on the road and came too late to bring the message
of eternal life (as we shall learn in a moment). It is used by
certain magicians to discover thieves. They smear a chameleon
with a drug which makes it turn white and then let it go : "Then
the thief, wherever he may be, also turns white, and if he does not
confess his theft, he dies!"

The flesh of none of these lizards is eaten, but that of the big 136
Varan which lives near the rivers, *Kwahle* (dji-ma), is considered 825
a delicacy. The kwahle is said to be very hard to kill. About 262
Crocodiles (*ngwenya*, yin-tin) all sorts of stories are told. When 787
one of them has been killed, the contents of its stomach are
carefully preserved ; Thongas assert that each year, when the
rains begin, crocodiles swallow a stone, so that their age can
be known by counting them. These stones are taboo ; for a
subject to swallow them is a cause of death, but one of them
is chosen, treated with certain drugs and swallowed by the chief
to warn him of his death, as we have already seen (I, p. 393).
Crocodile stones play an important part in divination. (See Part
VI. Ch. III. D).

Tortoises, whose generic name is *Mfutju* (yin-tin), are eaten and
also used in the divinatory art, as we shall see. Some lake tortoises
are called *Gamba* (dji-ma) and sea tortoises *Hasi* (dji-ma).

Snakes (nyoka, yin-tin) are generally dreaded and considered 825
dangerous, although many kinds are quite harmless. The 136

lightning), or animistic (Son-of-the-Moth). But they are not of much 771
importance. They belong to the same category as the description given 774
by the Psalmist of the sun as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, or to that of Homer comparing the break of the day to a young damsel with rosy fingers. This is poetry, mere personification of natural objects, or forces, and not beliefs. The poetical tendency is very marked amongst primitive races. It may be that ideas of this kind were more firmly held in former times, if the tribe has really passed through a more mythological phase, a hypothesis for which there are some grounds.

2) COLLECTIVE BELIEFS.

The beliefs of the Thongas which deserve to be called by that name 771
because they are universal and express themselves in important rites and 769
customs, are the following :

1. The human soul continues its existence after death, when it is 775
endowed with new powers which make it an object of awe and fear. *The spirits of the ancestors* are the main objects of religious worship. They form the principal category of spirits (psikwembu).

2. Although the spirits of the departed generally have nothing to [789]
do with people other than their descendants, some of them, especially *those belonging to foreign tribes*, can take possession of living men and cause troubles which must be cured by a process of exorcism. This is the second category of spirits.

3. Some individuals have the power of magically unsheathing themselves 774
during the night, and their spirit goes out to torment, or to kill 754
and eat other people. These are *the wizards* (baloyi) : this third category
of spirits accomplish their wicked deeds when separated from 791
the body, but their body is still living and they re-enter it. These three beliefs are distinctly animistic.

4. There is in man, and in a few large animals, a semi-spiritual 771
principle, the nuru, which escapes from the body when the individual is 774
killed in war, or in hunting, and through which the dead man, or animal, 828
avenges himself or itself on the murderer. What is the relation between the nuru and the shadow (sitjhuti)? This is not stated. The nuru seems to be of a more material nature, as it can enter a root, and it remains attached to the corpse and the bones of the person or animal killed. This category of spiritual enemies, probably invented under the influence of fear and remorse, has no connection with ordinary people,

771 and only troubles those who have killed, rendering them, as is generally
774 believed, insane. — The nuru belief seems to be a compromise between
828 Animism and Dynamism. (See p. 77-80.)

5. There are in plants, animals, stones, hidden virtues which can be
789 either useful or harmful to man. Medicine-men (tinanga) possess a more or less esoteric knowledge of such, and magicians (bangoma), endowed with special powers, can acquire a control over these virtues and use them in medical art, or in magic. — This is true Dynamism.

6. Certain natural objects, such as the sea, the bush fire, are sometimes vaguely personified. — This is Animatism.

772 7. But above them all is Heaven, Tilo, which is sometimes looked on as a real being, sometimes as an impersonal power, a number of mysterious superstitions finding their explanation in this strange and perhaps obsolete notion of Heaven. — This is more than Animatism and seems to be a vague theistic, even monotheistic, idea.

771 The essential difference between Animism and Dynamism seems to
774 me clear. But it is by no means absolute. We shall often meet with rites which belong to both domains, or bear an intermediate character. In the following chapters the exact nature and influence of these various kinds of spirits and impersonal forces will be studied, and I hope that an explanation of all the facts concerning them will throw more light on the subject and show that, at any rate, Thonga Animism is very different from the Animism of the Dutch East Indies, for instance, where men speak of thousands of spirits of the earth, air, water, mountains and trees; very different also from the fetichism met with in other Bantu tribes of Central and Western Africa.

⁂

82 Before leaving this chapter, in which I have tried to sketch what I have
789 called by the rather pretentious term of The Natural Philosophy of the Bantus, and as a preparation for the explanation of the religious and dynamistic rites described in the following chapters, I think it advisable to set forth the principles which seem to underlie most of these rites, and which may be called the *axioms of primitive mentality*.

As regards what are commonly called *magic rites* I contend that they are in no sense purely arbitrary but that they rest on certain definite principles. These axioms of primitive mentality are what anthropologists fittingly call collective representations, viz., everybody believes

them. Whatever may be their origin, they form a part of the mental 82
make up of every Native. A careful study of the rites reveals at least
three such axioms: Like acts on like and produces like; the part 789
represents the whole and acts on the whole; the spoken wish produces
the desired result.

1) *Like acts on like and produces like.* All the elements of Nature are dependent on each other, and if there is a similarity between two of them, they are at once brought into a special relation with each other and begin to influence each other. The application of this principle is universal, in the religious as well as in the dynamistic domain. The Native mind is extremely quick at perceiving a similarity between the most heterogeneous objects or phenomena, and immediately establishes a causal relation between them. We have already met with scores of instances of this law. *Colour* acts on colour; black sheep and black smoke produce a black cloud full of rain (p. 318). *Form* produces a similar form; a necklace of maize grains round the neck of a small-pox patient produces an eruption of small, transparent, pustules which are not dangerous, in place of the large, thick, deadly ones. (See Chapter III. A.) *Disintegration* produces disintegration; the chewing of a bean ensures the melting of the iron ore in the kiln (p. 359). *A certain state of mind* produces a similar condition in living beings, and even in material phenomena; the continence of little children ensures control over the flame of the furnace (p. 11[illegible] whilst the passion of married people accelerates disease, and increases the fury of wild beasts, (p. 61) etc. (1)

This kind of magic has been called *imitative magic.* A corollary of this principle is that the image or object representing a thing is in close relation with the thing itself, and any action performed on the image will have its repercussion on the thing represented.

---

(1) To show how far this action of like on like can go, let me quote this final 825
example which I gave in my paper on *The Magic Conception of Nature amongst* 955
Bantus (South African Journal of Science, Nov. 1920). A magician has had the good luck to discover a crow's nest full of young. He climbs up the tree, and ties all the little birds together by their feet. The mother crow, however, is not at a loss to deliver her progeny. She brings each day a leaf taken from different trees, and places it in the nest. The magician keeps watch. He climbs the tree, looks at the leaf, and recognizes the tree from which it has been taken. He then goes and digs up a piece of root from that tree. After a few days he will have collected quite a bundle of different roots. By that time the little crows will be free, the string which bound them having given way, or having rotted, and the magician will possess a medicine of first rate quality. By means of it he will be able to free any patient from any disease or worry by which he is held fast.

82
789

2) *The portion of a complexus acts on the whole.* The elements of Nature are considered as forming complexuses in which the component parts are united in such a manner that they react on each other. The body forms such a complexus ; an isolated organ can therefore act on the whole body or replace it. (See the case of the trumpet of heaven (p. 314) which is the femur of the bird of lightning and which is used to expel the thunderstorm). But there are much more complicated complexuses, for instance the village, muti. When death strikes its chief or any of its members, everything is contaminated (I. p. 143). Material contact is of paramount importance here ; but more spiritual considerations are also taken into account in establishing these complexuses. Why is it the first wife of the hunter who must shut herself up in the hut in order to save her husband from the fury of the hippopotamus (p. 69)? Because she is united to him by a mysterious tie, being the lawful, true wife (I. p. 284). The community of life is more complete between her and her husband than between the hunter and his minor wives. For this reason, I prefer to call this form of magic *communionist magic* rather than sympathetic magic, the term generally employed. In many magic rites imitative magic and communionist magic are combined.

3) *The words in which a wish is emphatically expressed produce the desired result.* Primitive man in the hierarchic form of his social group, is accustomed to command and to be obeyed. He attaches great importance to his word, and intends natural forces to accomplish his will as well as his subordinates. This may be one of the reasons for the prevalence of this kind of magic, which has inspired incantations, imprecations, etc. There are no doubt other reasons, and the forms of verbal magic are numerous.

It is evident that we cannot assign any scientific value to any of these axioms of primitive mentality. They are absolutely false. It is not true in actual life that like produces like, that the part acts on the whole, and that the expressed wish produces the desired result. The magic rite may be attended with some objective result in as much as its performance gives the performer greater confidence in himself, thus producing an auto-suggestion favourable to the success of the operation. Moreover the magician develops certain subliminal powers which are not yet well understood but which are real and may be effective (especially in the domain of divination). But magic rites are utterly irrational ; they are doomed to disappear before the advance of Civilisation and Science.

It is said that, in olden days, there was an anchor there, and before 776
sacrificing, the priest always used to lift it up, and let it fall to the 778
ground, saying: "Shawan! (I salute thee) Tembe!" If the sacrifice was acceptable the sound of a trumpet: "bvé... bvé...," was heard, far away in the depths of the woods, but no form was ever seen. This anchor also possessed extraordinary powers. When the country was at war with its neighbours, and matters did not go well with Tembe, the anchor would move off by itself into the Matjolo district. This was the portent of some terrible catastrophe!

No one ever penetrated very far into the sacred wood of [789]
Tiyini, of the Matjolo clan, for it was said that any one doing so would be lost, and unable to find his way out. When the people of Matjolo were in need of rain, they took a young man of the country into the wood, and there abandoned him. The gods accepted their offering, and the young man, struck with paralysis, was unable to follow in their retreat those who had led him to martyrdom! He saw them going away, but remained behind to be devoured by the gods. The others hastened to sacrifice and returned home; they were forbidden to look behind them. Once home, they told how they had seen on the ground, in the wood, foot-prints of adults, and even of little ones who must have been old enough to crawl on their hands and knees! Often, they say, they brought back the rain with them!

According to all these stories, it is evident that, in the Thonga 769
mind, the ancestor-gods dwell in the sacred woods, and lead a life 776
there in the earth, and occasionally outside, very similar to the
terrestrial one. Mankhelu had, however, another idea, which is 778
difficult to reconcile with this representation. On his forked 789
magic pole he had a long shining grey branch of a climbing shrub called *ñwabola*. This has enormous thorns, which are supposed to have the power of calling the precious things which are far away, and of gathering them in the hut: money, oxen, girls to marry, etc., and also the ancestor-gods: "When they pass through the country, coming from our old domicile, near the Limpopo, they are caught by the thorns, and settle here to bless
us." This idea that the gods fly through the air, is very rarely met 769
776

787 see, why divination plays such an important part in their life.
769 It is of the utmost importance to know what their gods think
776 and do, as the very existence of the village, and of the clan, and
the welfare of every member of the clan depends on them. Is
not Bukwembo, Divinity "the power of killing or of making alive,
of enriching or of making poor?" Natives believe firmly in these
two opposite actions of their gods. They are the masters of
everything: earth, fields, trees, rain, men, children, even of
baloyi, wizards! They have full control over all these objects
or persons.

769 The gods can *bless*: if the trees bear plenty of fruit, it is because
776 they have made it grow (I. p. 414); if the crops are plentiful,
it is because they forced wizards to increase them, or hindered them
777 from spoiling them (I. p. 396); if you come across a pot of palm
wine, it is your god who has sent you that windfall (p. 44). When
Mboza escaped from the Morakwen battle, one of his relatives
exclaimed on his return home: "The gods of Makaneta have
still been with you!" (Psikwembu psa ka Makaneta psa ha ku
yimelele.) Often when a man has narrowly escaped drowning,
or spraining his ankle on a stump which has caught his foot, he
will say: "The gods have saved me."

769 But they can also *curse*, and bring untold misfortune on their
776 descendants. If the rain fails, it is owing to their anger; if a tree
789 falls on you, they have directed its fall; if a crocodile bites you, the
753 gods have sent it; if your child has fever and is delirious, they are
in him, tormenting his soul; if your wife is sterile, they have
prevented her from childbearing; perhaps the gods of your mother
have done this, because you had not given your maternal uncle the
tjhumba part of the lobolo, which he has the right to claim (I. p. 267);
in fact any disease, any calamity may come from them. There are,
of course, other sources of misfortune: the baloyi, for instance, or
Heaven, and the bones will show who has caused the mischief;
but the ancestor-gods are certainly the most powerful spiritual
agency acting on man's life. Hence the necessity of propitiating
them by prayers and sacrifices.

II. *The Means of Propitiation. Offerings and Sacrifices.*

It is no wonder, since these spirits are so terrible, that their 769
descendants have sought means of propitiating them. The study 782
of these rites is very interesting, and will throw more light on 789
the ideas of the Bantus concerning their ancestor-gods. Some of these means of propitiation bear a magical character. For instance, when Mankhelu wished to induce the gods to sleep and leave him in peace, he took roots which had been brought to light naturally by a swollen river that had washed away the ground The reason is clear ; the gods are in the earth, therefore things found in the earth can influence them. So he cut these roots in small pieces, cooked them with the flesh of a goat, and drank the broth ; the assagai which killed the goat had been first smeared with a powder made of these roots. He fastened the astragalus of the goat on his ankle, on the right side if the god to be propitiated belonged to his father's family, and on the left if it was one of his mother's ancestors. If the propitiatory ceremony was performed for a woman, the astragalus was tied with a strap "en bandouillère" round her body.

We shall often see such *magic acts* performed in the ancestor worship of the Thongas. This is in keeping with their general conception of Nature, as already explained (p. 369), and with the magic principles or axioms of primitive mentality. But to the magic element is added the religious ; the officiant is aware that he intends to influence living, conscious and superior beings, therefore he has recourse above all to specifically *religious means*, viz., to offerings and prayers. He presents to his gods what he calls a *mhamba*, and not *miri*, charms or medicines similar to those employed in magic proper. We shall understand more fully what the word mhamba means when we have described the various kinds of offerings.

1) Classification of Offerings.

These offerings are much more complicated and varied than 782
they at first seem. The following principles of classification may be applied to them :

782 addresses his prayer to his ancestor-gods in order to be delivered
787 from his enemies.

The Offering of a Thorn (Mhamba ya Mutwa). This is also called *ku hahla ka shihlahla*, the sacrifice of the forest. The headman has seen that misfortune has fallen on his village; all his people die, the village is about to disappear, to become merely a part of the bush. He goes to the forest, picks up a thorn there and accomplishes the religious act by sucking the thorn, and emitting his saliva. Then he returns to the forest and places the thorn where the bones have ordered him.

782 *The Offering of Contempt (Mhamba ya Litsañwa)*. We have
782 already seen a case in which this offering is made. It is a compo-
824 nent part of the burial ritual (I. p. 142) and we have called it the rite
of the twig. But it can be performed on other occasions also. In certain clans (Nkuna-Khosa, Hlengwe) it does not take place at the burial, but is of common use when someone wishes *to avoid contempt*, to be well received by those to whom he goes; for instance when he goes to his debtors and fears that they may despise him and perhaps refuse to accept his claim, or when a young man goes to woo a girl and is afraid that she may not look favourably on his suit. The religious act is performed as follows. The officiant cuts a twig of the nkanye tree. We have often mentioned this tree, whose fruits are used to prepare the famous bukanye beer; it is everywhere regarded as the best of trees, and highly valued. It is dioecious, as we have seen (I. p. 397). The twig must come from a female stem, if a man *hahla* for himself, from a male stem if a woman does so. The officiant bites the extremity of the twig till he has drawn a little of the sap into his mouth; then he emits that sap together with his saliva, and proceeds to his prayer.

● 789 *The Offering of the Fig Tree (Mhamba ya Hlulawumbe)*. This
782 tree is called shihlampfana or hlulawumbe. It frequently grows
824 as a parasite on another tree; or surrounds it, growing close to
its stem, and in this way kills it. If a man has enemies, if there are people who hate him, he digs up a bit of the root of this fig tree and uses it in making his prayer. These troublesome persons will be choked, destroyed, just like the stem close to which the hlulawumbe grows. (Hlulawumbe means to overcome others).

782 whom they sometimes pray in the hut (See App. IV). Amongst
593 Thongas the wife does not adopt the gods of her husband's
793 family (1).

The beginnings of the *constitution of a sacerdotal caste* may be seen in the fact that in each clan, the mhamba, the sacred object used by the royal family to invoke its gods, or the drug on which national invulnerability depends, is entrusted to the care of a certain man, whose office is hereditary. As soon as the political tie becomes stronger, and the power of the paramount chief greater, the religious acts which are performed at the capital gain in importance, and the person who officiates becomes a kind of high priest. Should this evolution continue, it is easy to see how a sacerdotal class may be formed at the expense of the primitive family worship, which thus increasingly loses its importance. Amongst the Thongas this has not yet taken place, and their religious system seems to correspond to a very ancient state of things ; it is in all probability the pure form of primitive Ancestrolatry.

b) The Thonga Conception of the Offerings.

782 With the help of new information obtained since writing the
778 first edition of this book, I think it now possible to attain to a fuller
789 understanding of the meaning of this great Thonga word *mhamba* which I have translated either by offering or by sacrifice, in connection with the killing of a victim. Under this designation come objects of two distinct categories : articles of food, clothing, etc. which are of immediate service to human existence and which are *given* to the ancestor-gods, and magic or magico-religious objects which are not given but only employed in the act of worship. The aim is the same, whatever may be the nature of the object, viz. to obtain the favour and help of the ancestor-gods, but in the first case the officiant adresses himself to living, conscious

---

(1) There seems to be a profound difference between Thongas and Suthos on this point. The Rev. P. Ramseyer assured me on very good evidence that in Basutoland "a wife takes the family name (seboko) of her husband and abandons her *midimo*." The midimo, says my informant, are not only the *badimo* proper, i. e. the ancestor-gods, but all the supernatural powers in which a given clan trusts, the totem, the spirit (moea) of hail, of rain, of lightning, of disease. A Sutho woman can become a Tebele by marriage, though this seldom actually happens.

spirits, endowed with intelligence, feelings and will, and tries to 782
induce them to respond to his needs, whilst, in the second case he 778
trusts that his offering will act on them magically, i. e. automatically, 789
according to the principles of magic explained above. Let us
consider these two kinds of mhamba more closely.

1) *The gifts.* As regards their nature these are indeed most 782
varied, consisting in the first place of *domestic animals*, the ox, goat, fowl, which are only used by subjects, the sheep being the offering proper to the chief (p. 50). Pigs are not accepted for the altar, neither are antelopes, or other kinds of game. I have never heard of any offering consisting of the flesh of wild beasts. The victim is generally killed, but there are cases of its being consecrated *living*. If a living hen or goat is given to the gods, (a ring sometimes being attached to the leg of the fowl), it is taboo henceforth to kill or sell it ; if it dies, it must not be eaten, and it must also be replaced by another (1). Another kind of living offering is the *human sacrifice* made in certain sacred woods in order to obtain rain, but this is rarely resorted to. "The victim wanders about in the forest till he dies," says Mboza ; "the gods take him."

The most common kind of offering is *the produce of the fields*, chiefly the Kafir Corn in the official luma, but also other cereals, sorghum maize, likoro (p. 11), various kinds of pumpkins. Ground nuts are never offered. But the ancestor-gods appreciate drinks, not only the national beer, but also the wine of the Whites. They like narcotics as well as intoxicants, and tobacco is one of the gifts most frequently made to them.

Clothing, especially handkerchiefs of various designs (these designs being often prescribed by the bones) is often offered, even ornaments, e. g. the bracelet in the sacrifice for the uterine nephew (p. 396) ; but it is the sick boy who wears it, probably instead of the gods.

Lastly one sometimes finds on the graves "wealth, hlengwe,"

---

(1) I have heard of two cases of a *living human offering* in the Bilen and Manyisa regions. A girl had been consecrated to the ancestor-gods ; she was therefore a mhamba. In the first case a goat had been given to them also, as a living mhamba. The girl died, and the goat ought to have been burnt together with all her belongings, but her parents presented it to Christian Natives, who were free from the fear of the ancestor-gods.

782 *Shimantji* is the term used for left; its etymology is unknown.
562 *Shinene* means right; it also indicates nice, good, true. In this as in many other instances the male sex has arrogated to itself the better part!

782 789 778 2) *The magical objects used in worship.* First of all comes *the great mhamba*, the nails, hair or faces of deceased chiefs. We are evidently dealing here with a case of *communionist magic.* I explain in the same way the use of roots brought to light by a river which has washed away the ground (p. 387), but it may be that this is also an instance of *imitative magic*: the roots were hidden in the soil and have come to light; in the same way the ancestor-gods have been buried in the ground and have again come forth to bless or curse their descendants. The curious astragalus bone of an antelope which had been swallowed by a hyena and found later in its stools and which Mankhelu employed to represent the gods in his divinatory set of bones, would favour this second explanation. In fact most of these objects are supposed to act in virtue of the principle of similarity: the nkanye twig, because this venerated tree will ensure respect to the person, living or dead, for whom it is used; the piece of charcoal, because the enemy will be reduced to impotence just as the piece of wood has been consumed by fire; the thorn employed by the general of the army, because the warriors will be able to pierce their opponents and kill them, etc. Is the number of magic objects used in this connection limited to those I have mentioned? I do not think so. It is probable that some others may be found in the various parts of the tribe. I even have proof that new objets of a magic character are still invented by worshippers who are gifted with special imaginative powers. My old friend Mankhelu was telling me the particulars of the battle of Nov. 1901, during the Sikororo war (I. p. 513), when suddenly jumping to his feet and taking a small bundle of grass, he said: "Listen! I will show you the mhamba I made when the enemy rushed on us. I took a bundle of grass like those which women use for binding their sticks, and feverishly separated the blades, saying: 'Let them fail to surround us, or decoy us!' Then I scattered them in all directions and said: 'Let them be so dispersed, carried off and destroyed!' And this is exactly what happened.

On my return from the battle I showed all the army how I had 782
prayed." The old general's spontaneous appeal to the gods on 789
behalf of his country in its hour of supreme danger is indeed 778
worthy of notice, and also furnishes a proof that ancestor-worship is still a living force and has not become a mere matter of ritual amongst those who practise it. This prayer of the Nkuna general, this exclamation of an anguished soul in the presence of a great danger, may be regarded as *verbal magic*, as it is not expressedly addressed to the gods, and the same may be said of the formula employed to cancel an oath in the offering of reconciliation, the mention of the gods being absent in this case also. All these acts, however, are mhamba. They are in reality accomplished with the idea that the gods hear and see what is said and done and will be induced to deliver their worshippers.

The magic character of these rites is most marked in the cases of communionist magic ; those which are classed under imitative magic may perhaps be more properly called *symbols*, or at least some of them (1).

Elias Libombo once came to me and said : "My brother, Klass, 787
died. He was *the mhamba of the Libombos*. Now his younger 793

---

(1) But what is a *symbol* in religion, and what is the difference between the symbol and the magic rite ? I cannot treat this important subject here in all the necessary detail and length. Let us take only one instance. The offering of incense which took place every evening in the Temple of Jerusalem and which is also widespread in certain branches of the Christian Church is regarded as a symbol. The perfumed smoke which ascends towards heaven corresponds to the prayers of the worshippers, which are thought of as ascending to God and pleasing Him, just as the agreeable smell of incense gratifies the nostrils of the man who perceives it. But in the Hebrew religion it is not thought that incense conveys prayers to God in some actual and magical fashion. It is a symbol. Psychologically speaking this use of incense is probably to be explained in the following manner : The material representation of a religious act (or a religious truth) tends to induce in the worshipper a stronger faith in the efficacy of the act or the reality of the truth. His soul thus finds satisfaction in the performance of the symbolic act through which he feels himself brought into closer communion with his God. It is easy to understand that in the course of the religious evolution, a higher conception of God should have caused the magic act to evolve into the symbol, and that the symbol itself should be abandoned or reduced to a minimum when the idea of God has become perfectly spiritualised and communion with the Father who is in Heaven is realised without any external and intermediary means. A comparison of the great mhamba with the relics of saints or other relics used in certain religions would probably show a similar type of evolution.

Some scientists believe that religious evolution contained a *preanimistic phase*, in which the worship of spirits had not yet come into existence, and in which primitive man employed only magic means to influence the supernatural powers. This

787 brother will be so called." Nkolele, the father of these two men,
793 was the Libombo mhamba before them. This is another meaning of this great word mhamba. Klass was neither a gift made to the ancestor-gods of the Libombos, nor a magic object employed to win their favour, but he was the elder member of the family, the one who was the official and indispensable intermediary between all the Libombos and their gods. For this reason he was a mhamba. This leads me to propose the following definition of the word : *A mhamba is any object or act or even person which is used to establish a bond between the gods and their worshippers.*

Having thus analysed all the elements contained in the Thonga mhamba, we may safely conclude that its spiritual and religious value cannot be denied. Whatever place ritual may hold in the ceremonies of ancestrolatry, whatever mixture of devotional and magic elements may be found in them, the offering is not a mere external gift which appeases the gods by its material value, nor a simple means of coercion which forces them to submit to the will of the worshipper. By means of the mhamba the Thonga really aims at entering into relationship with those powerful spirits who control his life (1).

---

may be true, but as regards Bantus, they have long outgrown this stage. Even when they have recourse to magic processes in order to influence their ancestor-gods, these have a distinctive character, different from that of the ordinary magic which they practise when they wish to affect the impersonal forces of Nature. Everything done in order to obtain the favour of the ancestor-gods is a *mhamba*, not a *muri*, as I have already pointed out.

782 (1) Religious and magic practices are more or less mingled in Thonga ritual and it
is evident that the smaller the degree of magic contained in a rite, the more genuine
789 religious feeling there will be in it. I owe to my Venda informant the description of
a sacrifice performed in his tribe for a sick child, where the two elements are combined
755 to an extraordinary extent. It is called *the offering of the goat with clothes* (mbudzi
ya u dzwindiso).

A goat is provided. It is placed before a basin of water mixed with certain drugs and forced to drink, to drink till it is fully distended, and dies. It is then skinned and cut open. The large intestine is extracted from the body, and a part of it is cut off and stitched up at one end so as to form a kind of pouch. From each limb a bit of meat is taken, and a provision of the seeds of various cereals, brought to the spot together with drugs. All these different kinds of food are introduced into the pouch, the process of filling it being accompanied by prayers to the ancestor-god. The officiant, whilst proceeding with his task, puts seeds into the goat's intestine with one hand, and, with the other, takes other seeds and places them apart. These he will keep carefully in order to sow them later on. And continually he prays : "Eat your fill and be satisfied, and leave us some for our use." Thus the ancestor-god has been fed, well and duly stuffed. The pouch is then stitched at its other end. But now the ancestor-god must be clothed

c) Prayers.

The act of prayer is called *khongota* (Ro.), *khongela* (Dj.) 782
(the same word being also employed to mean "supplicate"); or *bulabulela*, to speak to, or scold the gods; *bukutjela* means a long, meandering prayer in which the officiant says the same thing over and over again. I have given twenty-two different forms of prayer when describing the manifold religious acts of the Thongas: two prayers of medicine men (I. 55, II. 393); those pronounced on the day of marriage (I. p. 111); of death, with the nkanye twig (I. p. 142); in the ceremony of crushing down the hut (I. 161); at the distribution of the widows (I. 208); at the death of a sister (I. 216); in the ceremony of killing the tie of consanguinity (I. 258); on journeys (I. p. 340. II. p. 394, 398); on offering the first fruits (I. 396); before the tjeba fishing (II. p. 87); when sneezing (II. 361); on offering tobacco at the altar (II. p. 390); for a sick nephew (II. p. 396); at the sacrifice of reconciliation (II. p. 399); at the worship of the Makaringe family (II. p. 403);

also! A strap is cut from the goat's skin and the sacrificer winds it all round the 782
pouch. Carrying the offering with him he now goes to the grave of the grandfather, 789 ●
digs, and lays the pouch in the earth parallel to the body beneath; he then prays again:
"We worship you, grandfather! And we have clothed you. This is your food. 755
Eat and be full and be contented. And leave us food, plenty of food that we also may be contented, and bless the sick child."

Let us try to analyse this rite according to the ideas of magic which we have explained, p. 369. We are dealing here with the ancestor-god complexus. A goat is provided, a gift made. This is religion. This goat has now become one of the possessions of the ancestor-god, a part of him. Henceforth the goat represents the god and an action performed upon it will be at the same time performed on the god. The goat is filled with water to quench the thirst of the god. A pouch is made of the intestine, a part of the animal which will now represent the whole, and food is introduced into it to feed the god. All these acts are instances of *communionist magic*, and the prayer which accompanies them is the religious element of the sacrifice. Some seeds are put apart to be sown later on. As they belonged to the provision made for the offering, these seeds partake of the nature of the whole of that provision; they have entered into the ancestor-god complexus; they are therefore particularly suitable for sowing, since the blessing of the powerful god will rest upon them. This is communionist magic again, whilst the filling up of the goat with water and food and the clothing its intestine with a strap may be regarded as *imitative magic*. The placing of the pouch in the grave facing the same way as the body of the ancestor once more signifies the identity of both, and the sacrificer is definitely persuaded that by all these rites he has really exercised a strong and compelling influence on his god (See my paper on "Some Features of the Religion of the Ba-Venda" *S. A. Journal of Science*, April 1921).

Special precautions are taken in respect to twins when they 845
pay a mourning visit. One of the grave-diggers meets them at the 765
entrance of the village and says: "Do not fear, Children of Heaven." He then puts some ashes on their heads and on their fontanelles. This is done because twins are feeble (ma ni bushapu) and the defilement might affect them more than other children. They must therefore be protected by smearing the middle of the head, and the "extremity of the tree of life," viz., the fontanelle, with a preventive. The mother also undergoes a similar treatment. She must prostrate herself near the hut of the deceased, at the place where the wall has been pierced to make an exit for the corpse. Then the grave-digger brings some live embers in a broken pot, pours a little water on to them, and dips his fingers into the water; he then presses both his hands against the woman's belly and brings them round her waist, pressing them all the while against the skin, until they meet on the spine; thus she is "cured inside" (dahiwa ndjen). This will prevent her from suffering from internal troubles, to which she, having given birth to Tilo, Heaven, is particularly liable. (Comp. I. p. 151) (1).

From this brief description of the customs connected with twins 845
in most of the Thonga clans, it may be seen that their explanation [783]
is twofold: 1) The birth of twins is a death, consequently a 772
defilement, indeed the worst of all defilements. Hence the 789
purificatory rites which bear the character of *passage rites*: the mother is secluded and passes through a period of isolation, after which she is again admitted to society after a painful "casting away of her misfortune." 2) But the cause of the defilement is not an ordinary death, but Heaven. *She is Heaven*; she is said to have

---

(1) Another category of persons bearing a special relation to Heaven are the 184
albinos. Cases of albinism are not frequent amongst South African Natives, yet they
are sometimes met with. They are called in Thonga *Khalandlati*, a word which 826
means literally *charcoal-lightning*. It is believed that they have been burnt (hisa) by
lightning in their mother's womb before their birth. "Ba tlalile, a ba wupfanga, ba 772
bengiwi hi tilo," viz. "they are uncomplete beings, they are not ripe, they have been
hated by Heaven"; these are the terms in which they are described. They are not 845
however regarded as taboo (yila), they merely inspire disgust (nyenya) (p. 83). As regards women suffering from this kind of disgrace, other women do not smear themselves with the same ochre as they, lest they should give birth to albinos; they do not drink from the same cup. Men do not marry them, and in this respect they are classed with leper women and witches, who are also looked on as repugnant.

845 *made Heaven* (a hambi Tilo), to have *carried Heaven* (a rwi Tilo), to
772 have *ascended to Heaven* (a khandjiyi Tilo). This connection
established between her and Heaven is clearly seen in the *rain*
● 789 *customs* previously described. Notice that the day following the
766 birth of twins is a *shimusi*, i. e. a day of rest. Nobody tills the ground, fearing that it would prevent rain from falling. When the *mbelele* takes place in Nondwane and Zihlahla (p. 318), the half naked women who are sent to clean the wells take with them a mother of twins. This is no doubt in order to show them where the graves of twins are. But there is also another reason. In the sacred wood of Libombo there is a hole into which the woman is put ; her sisters then pour on to her the water which they have drawn from all the wells, till the hole is half full, and the water comes up to her breasts. This will cause the rain to fall. Why is this? No doubt because, the woman of Heaven being wet, Heaven itself will be wet. Spoon did not give this explanation himself, but, when I suggested it to him, he accepted it readily. For the same reason the graves of twins are watered. In certain cases water is poured on the graves of the ancestors also, because rain is attributed both to them and to Heaven, and this watering the graves is meant to induce either Heaven or the ancestor-gods to cause rain to fall. Hence again the precaution taken of burying twins in damp places, and of exhuming them in times of drought if they have been buried in dry ground (1).

845 The connection between twins and Heaven, so clearly to
772 be seen in these customs, appears again in respect to thunder-
821 storms, which, as we shall see, are another manifestation of Heaven.
789 When lightning threatens a village, people say to a twin : "Help us! You are a Child of Heaven! You can therefore cope with Heaven (mi kota Tilo), it will hear you when you speak." So the child

---

845 (1) In other clans this law is extended to children prematurely born, even though they are not twins, and even to children who have not had the cotton string tied round their
761 waist or who have cut their upper teeth first. On the other hand, among the Nkunas no special connection seems to be established between twins and Heaven. These dif-
772 ferences may be explained by the fact that all these abnormal cases were ascribed to Heaven in former times, and the connection has been preserved in the various clans in
766 respect to one or the other of these categories. Note that, in the song of the widows (I. p. 207), the king Heaven appears to have caused the death of the husband ; this is another proof that Heaven was formerly considered the most frequent cause of death.

goes out of the hut and prays to Heaven in the following words : 845
"Go away! Do not annoy us! We are afraid. Go and roar far 772
away." When the thunderstorm has ended, the child is 821
thanked (1). His mother can also help in the same way, for has 789
she not ascended to Heaven? "She can speak with it, she is at it (or in it) — a li ku djone." (Spoon.)

We find in these rites a striking instance of the combination of the three forms of magic which have been explained above (p. 368). Heaven, rain, lightning, the mother of twins and the twins themselves form a connected whole. Action brought to bear on the mother of twins will therefore have its effect on Heaven ; this is *communionist magic*. This action consists in pouring water over her, (not only in plunging her into a lake). According to the principle of *imitative magic*, Heaven will thus be watered and will pour rain upon the earth. The act of the twin in commanding the lightning to spare the country is a case of *verbal magic*. All this would be logical enough and the conclusions perfectly legitimate if only the premisses were true!

Customs regarding twins vary from one clan to another. While 845
in one tribe they are put to death, in others their advent is considered an event of great happiness. This is the case in *Tembe and Maputju*, where women are said to wish for twins, and, if certain mothers have enjoyed this piece of good fortune, others ask them for some of the fat with which they have smeared their bodies, hoping by the use of the same ointment to obtain a like happy result. The hut is never burnt. The mother gives birth to the twins behind the hut (fukwen, I. p. 37). When it is time for her to re-enter her domicile, a hole is made in the wall at the back. The husband is excluded from the hut till the day of presentation to the moon (a ceremony which, in these clans, is not omitted in the case of twins). When he is again admitted, his wife strikes his legs with a stick, in order "to cure him" (ku mu

---

(1) Mrs. Junod, who was for years a missionary amongst the Fañ or Pahouin of the French Congo, told me that, one day, after a tornado, the rainbow suddenly appeared in the sky. One of her female pupils at once ran to her, and hid her face in her schoolmistress' lap. On asking the reason of this fear the teacher was told that this girl was a twin, and twins dare not look at the rainbow. So the connection between Heaven and twins exists also in this tribe of Western Africa. 171

825 presides over all unaccountable and unavoidable phenomena of the
772 atmosphere and of the life of the fields, or of human existence.

We have seen how the two sets of religious customs play their part side by side in the rites of rain-making. A similar coincidence may be noticed here. The removal of the "nunu," a rite which originated in the conception of Heaven, corresponds to the sacrifice of the chief in the Maluleke country, who gathers his sons together to pray to his ancestor-gods for the destruction of the vermin (psidi) which eat the mealies and endanger the harvest (p. 404).

3) HEAVEN, STORMS AND ROBBERS.

772 The most characteristic manifestation of Heaven is in the
821 storm. According to the statement of the credulous Natives, after
the women have finished cleaning the wells, and have watered
789 the graves of twins, clouds appear, a whirlwind arises, and "Heaven
627 begins to thunder" — "Tilo dji djuma." — I have already described
Thonga ideas about thunder and the lightning bird (p. 313), and the powerful charm made from the flesh, feathers and urine of this marvellous creature! There is still another use made of this extraordinary drug: It is a powerful aid in *tracing thieves*! The magician who possesses this powder of Heaven, (Ñwagwalen of Shikhabele in the Mabota clan), when called upon to point out the thief, acts in the following way. Suppose some one finds that some valuable article has disappeared from his hut, he will say to his near relatives, to those whom he suspects of having committed the larceny : "Take care! If you don't confess, we will go to Ñwagwalen, who lives at Shikhabele!" This threat may possibly be sufficient to elicit an avowal. If not, the individual who has been wronged goes to the diviner, and asks his assistance ; the latter takes his "bag of tricks," his drugs, and his big black stick, i. e., the stick which he was carrying when he dug in the earth and found the urine of the bird, or the bird itself. A notch has been made in the stick, to show the depth of the hole in which he has discovered Heaven. Carrying these charms, he goes to find the chief. An audience being granted, he cries aloud : "O Chief! a theft has been

committed! Now, no one ought ever to rob me. What shall 772
I do!" Then the Chief assembles his subjects and invites the 821
guilty one to confess. If all deny it, N̈wagwalen starts off, with all 789
his apparatus, for the place where the theft was committed, and 627
"treats it medicinally" (a dahela mbangu). He spreads out his drugs, raises his stick in the air, and addresses Heaven as follows :

> We, Tilo, hi wene u ka ni mahlu, u bonaka busiku ni nhlekanhi!
> Ba tekile psa nga ba kaneta! Tana u ba kom̃ba ba psha!
> Oh Heaven, thou it is who hast eyes which see as well by night as by day...
> They have stolen my goods, and they deny it! Come and discover them; may they be consumed!

Then the clouds begin to gather, and, towards evening, the storm breaks. Lightning strikes the thief in his hut, and causes the stolen articles to reappear. — "I saw this happen at Hoñwana," declared Spoon, "but of late years such occurrences have been less frequent."

According to Camilla, the guilty person is sometimes punished by a terrible attack of vermin, of which he is unable to rid himself; or he is confronted with several palm leaves, which, by a kind of supernatural judgment, turn into snakes, if he be truly guilty of having stolen the missing property.

The intervention of Heaven in the matter of detecting thieves is also an accepted fact in Khosen. My colleague, the Rev. A. Grandjean, told me of the following significant custom. When there is a storm, those who have missed any belongings go and stand at the door of the hut of the suspected thief, and it is quite possible that the inmate, terrified by the thunder, may throw out the stolen articles.

It may be concluded, from these perfectly authenticated [626]
customs, that the Natives attribute to Heaven the power of *omniscience*, more especially in respect to the detection of theft. The basket of bones is never consulted for this purpose. Moreover as Heaven guarantees property and makes people afraid to steal, it acts as a kind of *moralising influence*.

I have also been told by witnesses from the Nkuna region that 789
into the composition of the charm used to protect gardens against 772
thieves, (p. 30) there enters a little powder obtained by burning a

789 772 stem which has been struck by lightning, i. e. by Heaven ; or the magician will burn branches of the same tree in the garden itself and bring them near to the stalks in order that these may be surrounded by the smoke emanating from them. If a thief enters the garden with evil intentions, "Tilo dji ta mu dlaya, i. e. Heaven will kill him."

4) Heaven and the Balungwana.

772 825 776 In 1894, as previously stated, locusts, which had not been seen for some fifty years, made their appearance on the shores of Delagoa Bay, and also in Natal and the Transvaal. The popular imagination was, naturally, greatly stirred by this unusual phenomenon, which was at first greeted with smiles and astonishment, but which, later on, was the cause of endless lamentation. I was one day walking up the hill of Lourenço Marques with an old man, the counsellor of one of the sub-chiefs of Tembe, a thoughtful and intelligent person, when he said to me, with great earnestness, in a low voice, as if referring to some important event : "Have you not heard that in Maputju two dwarfs (psimhu-ñwanyana) fell from Heaven ; a little man and a little woman. They came to say to the people : "Do not kill the grasshoppers! They belong to us!" This counsellor only repeated what all thought and were saying in all the native villages ; these grasshoppers, arriving unexpectedly from on high, were a manifestation of Heaven, just like the lightning, rain, twins, or the nunu, and these celestial beings had come to announce it to men.

772 776 821 But belief in the existence of *special personages* in Heaven did not originate in connection with these terribly destructive insects. The idea had been familiar, for a long time past, to the Rongas, and probably to all the Thongas. These personages were not only described as dwarfs, but also as balungwana (p. 352). They were said to fall from Heaven at the time of the great rains. Thus, Timoteo Mandlati told me people had seen some of them appear, a long time ago, in the Nkuna country, and that they had gone back to heaven in a cloud ; they live in celestial space, and when it thunders without any rain falling, the Nkunas say :

CHAPTER III

MAGIC

Without pretending here to give definitions applicable to all the primitive races, well knowing how difficult the subject is, yet, I think I ought at the beginning of this Chapter to explain as clearly as possible the distinction which I draw between Religion, Magic and Science, as they are represented amongst the South African tribes.

I include under the term *Religious* all the rites, practices, conceptions, or feelings which presuppose the belief in personal or semi-personal spirits endowed with the attributes of Deity, and with which man tries to enter into relation, either to win their assistance or to avert their anger, essentially by means of offerings and prayers.

Under *Magic* I include all the rites, practices, and conceptions which aim at dealing with hostile, neutral, or favourable influences, either impersonal forces of Nature, or living men acting as wizards, or personal spirits, whether ancestor-gods or the hostile ghosts which are supposed to take possession of their victims, these rites and practices being inspired by the magic principles explained above (p. 368). I recognise two kinds of magic: *White magic*, by which man tries to protect himself against these influences, or turn them to his advantage, and *Black magic*, by which man attempts to make use of these forces against his fellows.

I call *Scientific* all the rites, practices, and conceptions which are inspired by a true observation of facts. I include in this category certain medical treatments, ideas as to botany and zoology, etc.

These different elements are intermingled in practice to such an extent that, as explained in the preceeding Chapter, Religion is largely adulterated with Magic. On the other hand, Magic often admits religious elements (see Possession), and the true domain of Science is invaded on all sides by conceptions of a magical character. This will be shown by the study of the four subjects which I include in the Chapter on Magic, viz.: Medical Art, Possession, Witchcraft and Divination.

The confusion between these three domains also accounts for the composite character of those individuals who practise the medical, or magical art. The medicine-man (ñanga) is far from being purely a man of science, he partakes more or less of the nature of the magician, 789 and prays to the ancestors who transmitted their charms to him. The magician (mungoma) is sometimes a kind of priest when he undertakes to exorcise the spirits of possession. The diviner (wa bula), whose art is entirely based on magical conceptions, occasionally prays to his ancestor-gods to help him in throwing the bones which he has received from them. I am convinced that the three domains are essentially distinct, and that the Thongas have a dim perception of this distinction. But they grade into each other with the greatest ease, and I shall try to follow these gradations, faithfully endeavouring not to alter the original ideas, whilst trying to explain them intelligibly.

A. MEDICAL ART.

756 The medicinal practices of the South African Bantus are very interesting from the ethnographic point of view, but their study has also a practical importance. In all civilised lands the medical profession is subject to restrictions; the candidate must pass examinations showing that he is capable of treating his future patients. Nothing of this kind is to be found amongst the Thongas. The only qualification of the doctor is that of having inherited some recipes from one of his ancestors, and of using them with more or less success on voluntary patients. Should steps be taken by Colonial Governments to stop, or at any rate to regularise, the action of the medicine-men?

A precise knowledge of their practices is necessary in order to come to a conclusion on this point. Missionaries have also a great interest in this study. They have all noticed how often their converts, when sickness overcomes them, abandon the Mission Station and run to their quacks, sometimes brusquely interrupting a treatment which had been prescribed to them by a fully trained medical missionary. The result is almost sure to be the eventual loss of their health and of their faith. Let us, therefore, try to understand the Native medical art and see how far we can trust its representatives.

I. *The Medicine-men.*

I came across a good many *ñanga* (yin-tin), the technical name given to Native physicians. They are all very proud of their

756 evident consciousness of his talent and powers that he explained to me the uses of his medicines.

278 But the most distinguished medicine-man I ever met was old
756 *Mankhelu*, who may be looked upon as one of the masters of the profession in the Thonga tribe. "It is no play, what I am
789 doing! I have beaten an ox (i. e. made a present of an ox)
782 to my maternal uncle Hlomendhlen! I even gave him two oxen, and he taught me his medical art! He led me everywhere, showing me all his drugs." So Mankhelu became a regular ňanga, in addition to being a diviner, a master of the art of throwing bones, a rain-maker, a counsellor, and general of the army. His whole family shared his professional character, and helped him in his work. Every year, at the time of bukanye, the drugs had to be renewed. His wives went all over the bush to dig out the medicinal roots and to collect them in their *lihlelo* baskets (p. 123). On their return home the bones were consulted to find out who was to cut the roots in pieces (gemela). This having been done, they pounded them in their mortars ; a portion of this material was dried outside, and reduced to powder without having been cooked ; these were the *male medicines*. The other portion was roasted in pieces of broken pots, burnt until it was like charcoal, ground and made into a black powder ; these were the *female medicines*. The whole village assembled and inhaled the smoke through reeds during the operation. A goat was killed and a sacrifice performed ; the liquid contained in the *psanyi* (p. 410) was squeezed on the burning drugs to put them out ; a little bukanye beer was also used for the same purpose. In the meantime Mankhelu said "*tsu*," and addressed this prayer to his gods, and especially to the ancestor who had taught him his science :

> "You! so and so! Let these drugs of yours rise (pfuka, i. e. find new strength). Let people come from the Zulus, from Mosilekatse, from Mpfumu! Let them think of our leaves (matluka, the common name for drugs). Let them bring elephant tusks, marriageable girls, etc. Let them dream of us!"

756 This operation of renewing the drugs aims at giving them
278 new strength. Mankhelu said : "We let our drugs *luma* for
789

the new year ; we raise our calabashes, so that the new season 278
may not be too difficult for us... This will consolidate our home ; 756
bad coughs will not attack us too severely. It will shut out the
wind ; we shall no longer be very ill, because these are new 789
drugs. As regards the old ones, they have been contaminated
(khuma) by the misfortunes of last year. They are mad (hungukile). A new rain falls ; let there be also new drugs, and we can undertake our journeys to sell our goods." So the ñanga removed a little of the old powder from each calabash ; he threw this on the path at a crossway ; then he washed the calabashes at the same spot : "Misfortune is thus thrown away. Passers-by will take it with them as it has been thrown out there by us." Then the new powder was added to the remainder of the old, which was "raised" by it.

In order to throw more light on the nature of Mankhelu's 756
art, let me briefly mention *the roots* (rimetju), or *the leaves* (tluka, 789
ri-ma), or, to use the great, the generic name, *the drugs* (muri,
mu-mi) which composed the marvellous powder of the calabashes. 278
He was not a man of one drug. He claimed to be a universal 824
physician, so he mixed together all kinds of drugs, being sure that, in this way, they would certainly be effective in any case brought to him. Here is the description given by him.

Ntjebe : that by which we find strength to trample on our enemies ; we trample also on the winds which spoil the mealies ; we drive out the bad cold (or wind) which has come to us and made us cough. (Notice the triple use of this drug).

Shikuku : that which tramples on misfortune.

Mpoñwana wa burisi matuba-tubana : vanquisher of the enemy and of misfortune.

Shinano : that which induces the enemies to sleep ; you hang some leaves of it on your shield and they are overcome by drowsiness, they do not see you coming towards them.

Nembe-nembe. By it you reach your enemy while he still sleeps and kill him before he can defend himself.

Mpetshu wa milomo : that of the lips! It overcomes the curses and the assagais of the others!

756 *Rihinga ra ndlela* : a root found on the path ; it helps you to go
789 on, though others may seek to hinder you in your progress.
278 *Shivunge* : that which attracts patients to the doctor.
Nandjiyane : that which makes his words agreeable, so that
824 patients will like them ; (from ku nandjiya, to be agreeable).

Mvakazi, phuphuma ra matlhari : that which is used to make the slayers vomit the main drug of the *tintebe* (I. p. 479).

Mbendjula : that which strengthens all the other drugs.

These are the principal trees, or plants, used for the preparation of the powder. They must be *salted* by the addition of the *sea*, viz., of the medicines taken from the sea, which Mankhelu uses to cause rain to fall (p. 321).

The sexual character of the drugs is essential. The female are used principally for sprinkling the army and the assagais, the male for treating diseases. We find here again the law of opposition of sexes ; the military domain is the male domain par excellence : it must be treated by means of female drugs. On the contrary, when slaughtering a she-goat for the sacrifice, a little of the male drugs must be placed in its mouth and the weapon used to kill it must be smeared with the same, and vice-versa for the he-goat. "To act otherwise is taboo. All the ñanga do this" (p. 417).

755 There may be some true scientific elements in Thonga medical
757 practice. Experiments have been made in using certain roots to cure
certain diseases, and tradition has handed down some prescriptions
from father to son. Why should there not be effective curative
properties in plants of their country just as in the Cinchona bark, or in
Castor oil seeds? And why should they not have discovered them?
756 However the Native ñanga is by no means a scientific man, and the best,
789 the most renowned, are perhaps the least scientific. Those who treat
only one complaint, and only know one drug, are perhaps those most
resembling real physicians ; they act on the results of experiment.
But the line between science and superstition is very soon crossed, and
the medical art passes with the greatest ease into the domain of magic,
all the more so as the difference between Science and Magic is not
perceived. *Muri*, which means originally tree, plant, medicinal herb, is
at the same time any means of producing any effect, natural or super-

natural, on any influence, hostile or favourable, personal or 756
impersonal (1). That is why the *ntjebe* shrub helps Mankhelu to attain 789
three objects at the same time : cure a bad cough, protect the mealies, and rout the enemy.

The question has often been put : Are these medicine-men sincere? 755
or are they mere quacks living on the stupidity of the patients whom 756
they deceive? I am convinced, after having listened to their talk, that most of them thoroughly believe in the value of their drugs ; this does not prevent them from occasionally using tricks in order to impress their patients with their miraculous power. One of my pupils, who had accompanied a ñanga for a long time, wishing to enter the profession himself, and had thus had an opportunity to watch his master in his medical work, assured me that, as a rule, the man administered his drugs honestly and in good faith ; but if somebody came suffering from toothache and asked for relief, the doctor first procured a little worm found in the berry of a solaneous shrub called rulane. This he placed in a pot filled with boiling water. The patient had then to inhale the vapour from the pot, his head being covered with a cloth. When the inhalation was over the ñanga took a piece of charcoal and rubbed his forehead with it ; he did the same all round his eyes and told him : "Now your eyes are open and you will be able to see what it was that caused your suffering." He emptied the pot and the little white worm appeared at the bottom, resembling the caries of a decaying tooth : "This is what they had brought on you" the ñanga would add." ("They" evidently means the wizards.) This is clearly a trick pure and simple. But, according to my informant, it was also a medical treatment, because the aim of the trick was to convince the patient that he had been cured. It was thus what we should call a means of suggestion. If, after that, the suffering did not cease, the ñanga would tell his patient that he had not paid enough to effect the cure, that his ancestor-gods (those of the ñanga, who had given him his drugs) were angry at receiving such a small fee, etc. The trick of making patients believe that a harmful object has been extracted from their body is frequently used. We have

---

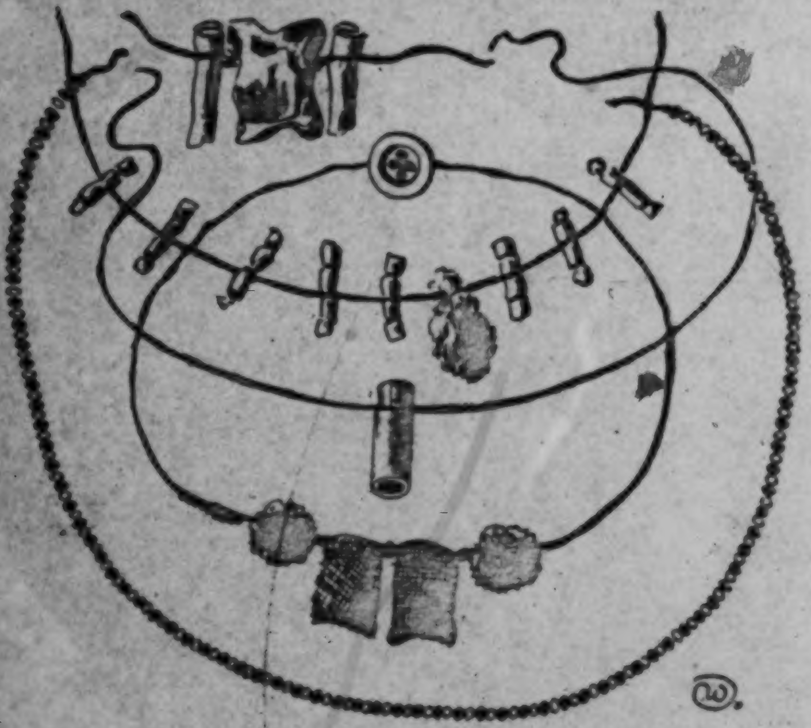
(1) The following story, which I owe to one of my colleagues, fittingly illustrates the ideas held by most of the Thongas concerning *muri*, remedy. A man of the Libombo clan found a bottle filled with a white salt which he at once recognized as being most probably a *muri*. He picked up the bottle and kept it carefully in his hut. One day, feeling unwell, he thought the occasion had come to use his precious drug. His wife bade him be careful, but he secretly swallowed a good dose. Was it not a *muri* ? He was poisoned, and would have died if my colleague had not succeeded in saving him by means of an antidote.

756 Henceforth he will lead a special life, characterised by protective
184 and propitiatory rites, which tend to the development of his
subliminal faculties.

1) Protective rites.

756 As soon as he was "born again" in the thwaza ceremony,
751 but to a still higher degree later on, after being elevated to the
dignity of the magician, the exorcised, having entered the myster-
789 ious world of those endowed with powers, becomes the butt of all
his colleagues in the magical arts ; first the baloyi, the witches, who *try* him, to see if he is able to discover their evil deeds, and secondly the other magicians, who are annoyed at seeing a rival ready to dispute their practice with them. So he must be continually on his guard ; in the evening, especially, he must protect himself against their nightly charms. The great protective medicine is a pellet made of the powder of many roots, which have been burned and bound together with fat taken from the bowels of a goat. The first of these roots comes from a tree called *mabophe*, found in the Bilen country. This has the power of tying (bopha, in Zulu, means to tie) the knees of the wizards who come during the night, so that they will be found in the morning, stark naked, in the hut of the exorcised. The *nulu* root seems to be used for the same purpose ; the *mala*, which also enters into the composition of the protective pellets, rather aims at ensuring the success of the treatment undertaken by the new gobela ; as its fruits are plentiful (p. 16), so will the possessed come in great numbers to the doctor. The pellet is used for medical treatment, but the same drugs are also kept in the form of powder, in a piece of reed, or in the calabashes hanging from the forked pole. Every night the exorcised swallows a pinch, and throws another pinch on the fire in his hut. This will prevent enemies from entering, or make them prisoners. Before eating, he must also protect himself by chewing (phora) a little of the *manono*, a kind of antiseptic or anti-witchcraft root as big as a stick, which he always carries with him ; this is the special *luma* (I. p. 146) of the exorcised. Who knows if his food has not been poisoned by the malpractices of his rivals?

When undertaking a journey, he must always chew his *ndjao*, the 756
juncus root which has often been mentioned and which "cleans 751
roads;" this is "his shield," because the ndjao knows and tries 789 ●
(djinga) everything, and overcomes the hostility of man and things. It is the universal remedy against any hostile influence. So, after having chewed, he spits on his stick, rubs it and starts on his journey, saying: "The road is ripe (wupfile), let us go!" — The astragalus will be the principal charm that the possessed will have to wear, and will be tied round his neck between two little amulet bags or reeds.



Protective amulets worn by exorcised.

The exorcised leads a life of constant fighting against evil spiritual influences. These protective rites are observed all through the year of convalescence.

Another rite, which is observed after the hondlola only, is 000

158 transported into the realm of divinity, thus giving rise to the true gods
753 and the devils. Possessing spirits are not worse than ancestor-gods.
They all are non-moral. They can bless and curse, and their moral
character is not taken into account at all.

2) The progress of modern psychology gives an explanation of
many of these phenomena. The disease of the personality which
manifests itself in the presence of a double psychological consciousness
is well-known ; the hypnotic suggestion which the tambourine players
unconsciously exert on their victims, sufficiently explains the origin of
the disease, and the kind of life led by the exorcised is well calculated to
develop their mediumistic faculties. So many of the so-called miracles
of possession are easily accounted for. It would however be going too
far to exclude, a priori, any possibility of external spiritual influences in
[797] those phenomena. There is one very striking fact which is a source of
great wonder to the Natives. These patients, as soon as they put
themselves under Christian influence, are healed at once and for ever.
We have, amongst our converts, exorcists who had acquired great fame,
and who recount, with glowing eyes, how they have been delivered
from their terrible anguish by their new faith. For, whatever success
they may have obtained in their career of exorcists, their condition was a
disease, a painful disease, and they are extremely glad to have been
delivered from it. This fact must certainly be remembered when
trying to arrive at an explanation of possession.

C. WITCHCRAFT.

789 I have pointed out, in an article published in the Report of
754 the S. A. A. A. S., of 1906, how little comprehension most White
people have of this important but difficult subject. A confusion
is almost always made between the *witches* and the *witch-doctors*.
The French word *sorcier* and the English term *sorcerer*, indiscriminately
used for those who cast spells and for magicians, lead
to the same misconception. In order to avoid errors it is, I think,
imperative first of all clearly to distinguish between *Black Magic*
and *White Magic*. The adjectives black and white are not
employed in this connection amongst South African Natives, but
Thongas certainly do make the distinction and possess different
terms for each. Black magic is called *Buloyi* ; it consists of the

criminal magical practices by which wizards and witches bewitch innocent folk. Buloyi is a crime. White Magic is called *Bungoma*, and means the magical operations of those who combat evil influences and use their powers for the benefit, and not for the ruin, of their countrymen. The *mungoma* (magician) is consequently the great enemy of the *noyi* (caster of spells). It may be that the power of both is at bottom of the same nature. But the use they make of it is entirely opposed, the one exerting it in the interests of Society, the other against it. We shall therefore have to deal with these two categories of persons in two separate paragraphs. 789 754

I. *Black Magic (Buloyi)*.

Buloyi, an abstract noun of the bu-ma class, as well as *noyi* (pl. *baloyi*), is derived from the verb *ku loya* (Ro.), *lowa* (Dj.), to bewitch. This word is very interesting. It seems to have been known already in the Ur-Bantu (Comp. Meinhof, *Grundriss*, p. 173) and exists in Swaheli, Herero, Xosa, Sutho, Thonga, etc. Strange to say, the stem is absent in Zulu, where it is replaced by *thakata*. In Thonga its most common meaning is to bewitch. But the word is also applied to the act of a man who marries his near cousin (I. p. 258). Moreover Nkolele, describing to me the sacrifice in the sacred wood, and speaking of the *ntukulu* who prepares to steal the offering, said : "Here is the *noyi*, ready to come and steal the beer..." I also heard the crocodile stone, used by the chief as a charm to protect his life, called *buloyi bya hosi*, the magical power of the chief (I. p. 393) ; these instances show that the word loya is sometimes, though rarely, used in a more general sense. Its technical meaning, however, is and remains : to injure or kill by enchantment. Who are these baloyi, and what crime do they perpetrate? [192]

1) THE BALOYI.

The *baloyi*, or people possessing the evil eye, are numerous in each tribe. Their power is hereditary, but, strange to say, it is transmitted by the mother and not by the father. Therefore 754

754 on the spot, unable to withdraw his hand from the cob! But, what is even more curious, the baloyi of one country assemble and form an army and go to fight with the baloyi of another, in order to deprive them of their mealies and carry them away to their own fields. For instance, in 1900, there was a great war between the baloyi of Mpfumu, near Lourenço Marques, and those of the peninsula of Inyack, at the entrance of Delagoa Bay. That year the Kafir beans were plentiful at Mpfumu, and this was explained by the fact that the Mpfumu baloyi had won the victory over their Inyack enemies. They owed their success to the following trick. They gathered a large number of seeds of the little cucumber, called nkakana, and made with them a kind of enormous ladder, which was suspended midway between sky and sea ; upon it they crossed the 20 or 30 miles of the bay of Delagoa and stole all the Kafir beans of Inyack (1). If a tempest has uprooted trees and broken branches, people are sure to say that the "army (yimpi) of the baloyi" has passed in the shape of a terrific storm during the night.

754 *b)* But the great crime of the baloyi is that of *killing*. They
789 are murderers, and all the more to be feared as they act unconsciously, without being seen or known. Two motives inspire their crimes — hatred and jealousy. If one of them has been offended, he is sure to revenge himself by putting his enemy to death. During the night he escapes from his hut (as we have seen above), opens his wings and flies directly to the dwelling of the man he hates. But the habitation of this man is well protected ; all round it there is a spiritual fence made up of charms, various

---

(1) On one of these expeditions to the Inyak Islands the baloyi of the Movumbi district wished to buy food from their colleagues beyond the Bay. A certain woman, who was a great noyi, took her daughter-in-law with her, but the latter was not a noyi. However she was led through the air, along the nkakana ladder, to the village of Magilankinsin, a headman of Inyak. This man refused to accept her, as she was ignorant of the buloyi art, and sent her back home. In the meantime the husband, Midlalen, noticed that his wife was not sleeping in the hut. When she reappeared in the morning he asked her : "Where have you been ?" — "To Inyaka." — "Indeed !" — "Yes ! I saw everything there." — "How did you go ?" — "I do not know." — "How did you return ?" — "I do not know." — "Have you seen Magilankinsin ?" — "Yes !" The husband suggested that his mother had played this trick by means of her buloyi and chased her away from his village. Mboza told the story as absolutely authentic, and added "these events occurred some ten years ago."

medicines which close the kraal against any invasion of witches. 754
What must he do in order to perpetrate his crime? He has first 789
made an agreement with another noyi residing in that village, who has made an opening in this spiritual fence, similar to one of the small holes in the material one! He then gets into the kraal, tries to penetrate into the hut by the door, finds it closed, beats on it and, being unable to enter that way, flies to the crown of the hut and descends through it into the abode of the enemy, calmly sleeping on his mat. Then he proceeds to the bewitching operation, and the poor bewitched man is condemned to die! "O loyiwile," — "he has been bewitched;" "ku sa ntjhuti ntsena," — "only his shadow remains." They also say that only the "ntjhumbu," the corpse, has been left, his true self having been stolen and eaten. He is sometimes called *ntungulu*, a word used to designate a wasp whose nest has been destroyed, and which flies about disconcerted, not knowing where to go, unable to sting, because it has no home... The heart of the bewitched has been stolen and put somewhere in a hole or a cavern (mhakwen). "Ba mu pepulile," they have ravished him, (like a feather taken away by the wind). He will get up in the morning, and die some days later, but what will die will be only his shadow. He himself was killed during that frightful night. He is already eaten! Or he will become mad (lihlanyi) and people will say: "The living have had the better of him" — "Ba mu kotile bahanyi." Here we find again, in an even more mysterious form, the idea of the duality of the human personality. How it is possible for a man who has still some days or months to live to be regarded as already entirely eaten up, I do not pretend to explain. Such is however the Native idea. One of my informants tried to overcome the difficulty by saying that what the noyi takes with him to eat is the inside, the bowels; the outward frame alone remains, and the man will soon die! Most of the Natives, when the absurdity of the idea is pointed out to them, laugh and say nothing.

In order to attain his criminal ends, the noyi may resort to 754
various means; he may point at his enemy *with the index finger*, which is a common method of bewitching in many nations. If, later on, you are overtaken by misfortune, you will remember

III. *The Method of dealing with Wizards.*

754
756
791
All the power of the magicians is resorted to in order to check the enchantments of the baloyi. Their drugs are used with two objects, — protection and cure, the cure consisting mainly in the disclosure of the wizard.

1) PROTECTIVE METHODS.

● 789
754
The village, as we have seen, (I. p. 311) is well protected with *anti-baloyi drugs*. The fence itself, the main entrance and the threshold of the headman's hut, have been magically treated when first built. But the magician, when he thinks it necessary, "revives" the drugs by burning his powder in a little fire on the road which enters the village. This protects the main entrance, and he does the same at the threshold of the headman's hut. The smoke will keep the wizards away. Stones, daubed with the powder, are placed in all directions to close the opennings.

"These medicines act wonderfully," says Mankhelu. "Should a *noyi* succeed in entering the hut, the power of the smoke will be such that he will at once be revealed. The *noyi* will suddenly be seen there without any clothing, apparently dreaming, seeing nothing, knowing nothing. If it is a woman, I shall call her husband and show him his wife... 'What are you doing here?' he will say to her. She will not utter a word. Then I shall say to him : 'Look here, my friend... I might be hard on you. But I have pity. Do not allow your wife to do anything of the kind again. Pay me one or two oxen, and I will keep silent.' He will consent. Then I beat the woman with my stick. She awakes, and, quite ashamed of being in another hut without any clothing, she will fly away home!" Such is the testimony of Mankhelu, and he is certain of having succeeded more than once!!

Mboza asserted to me that he had witnessed a similar case

789 754 in Muthiyane (near Rikatla). A woman had been thus "surprised by the rising sun" (shwela, p. 307). She was stark naked and had something red, like fire, on both shoulders ; these were the remnants of her wings. Having been overcome by the magical drugs she had been unable to reabsorb these wings into her flesh, and part of them remained outside. Every one ran away at this sight, and the chief ordered the woman to be shut up in her hut.

Some magicians used to fight the baloyi by *running through the bush during the night* and catching them as they flew by with their wings of fire. Note how Mholombo prevented two wizards from killing a woman (p. 500), and how the exorcised protect themselves by means of the mabophe drug, and by swallowing their nulu powder (p. 496).[1]

2) Method of disclosing the Baloyi.

754 But should all the protective medicines which surround the village, together with those which have been swallowed by the inhabitants, or by which they have been inoculated, remain without effect, and should a serious case of illness occur, one of those evils which are generally attributed to the baloyi, the first thing to do is to *detect* the culprit.

Who may he be? The patient's relatives have most probably already some idea on this point, because, at the beginning of most buloyi cases, something happens which arouses *suspicion*, and this is a very important point to be noted if we wish to find the psychological explanation of these customs. Perhaps there has been a quarrel between two persons, and one of them, in his anger, has said to the other : "N'ta ku bona" i. e. "I shall see you." On hearing this the people immediately say : "This man is a noyi. He has revealed by daylight his crimes of the night." The man himself had perhaps not the slightest idea of such a thing. The same conclusion will be drawn if he points to another person with his index finger (I. p. 250). An imprudent word which at first sight would appear quite innocent may have the same

[1] [For further information on methods of dealing with wizards see pp. 525-535 -- Analyst]

787 Does it come from a *religious belief*? It is not easy to say definitely to
791 what extent the divinatory art rests on religion. On the one hand, the power of interpretation of the bones comes from the ancestor-gods who were bone-throwers themselves, and they are invoked to give or to revive this power. Mankhelu even told me that the prophecy of the arrival of the strangers had been inspired in him by his deceased father Shiluvane. But the Bula, the Word, is not generally looked on as being the utterance of the ancestor-gods. The bones are, in a certain sense, *superior to the gods* whose intentions they disclose. The Bula is the revelation of a more or less impersonal power, independent of the gods.

787 It is undeniable that the divinatory art is *essentially magical* ; it rests
789 on those universal axioms of primitive mentality which are deeply
engrained in the Bantu mind (p. 368) and this is sufficient to account
791 for the indisputable value which it possesses in the eyes of the Thongas. Like replaces like. By virtue of mere external similarity one object can signify another. Thus human beings are represented by animals which resemble them in a certain point. The reedbuck which wanders during the night stands for the wizards who do the same ; the hyena, which eats the remains of the lion's feast, is the parasite who follows the chief, etc. Thus there are representative and represented objects. But like also acts on like : in some mysterious way the fate of the representative object will be the fate of the object represented. There is no doubt that diviners sometimes claim not only the power to form a diagnosis, to discover causes and give advice, but to influence the course of events themselves and determinate certain results. Mankhelu believed that he had contributed to the defeat of the Sikororo tribe when the bones so vividly depicted the rout of their army. If imitative magic controls the divinatory art, the part played by communionist magic is equally great. The part represents the whole. The astragalus, which is but a small bone, represents the whole body, and its fate prophecies the fate of the entire animal or person represented by it. The Native mind has a much profounder conception of the unity of the animal and human worlds than we have. Spoon once said to me mysteriously : "The astragalus of the goat truly represents the people of the village, because these animals live in the village ; they know us, they know what is in us." Observe also how the consultant takes the amulets of the patient and rubs them against the bones in order that they may be able to speak the truth about him. These amulets contain the nails and hair of the patient if they have been tied round his neck in the hondlola ceremony. Moreover they are covered with his "nsila," the exudation of his body,

the material representation of his personality. By this contact the 787
patient has in a way become a part of the "complexus Bula" and what 789
happens to the bones will also happen to him ; what is said by the bones
will henceforth apply directly to him. This magic conception of 791
Nature is probably the profound and secret reason why the diviners
believe so firmly in their art.

On the other hand, this art is so perfect that bone-throwers can 787
derive very great satisfaction from the practice of it. It must be born 181
in mind that, in fact, all the elements of Native life are represented by the
objects contained in the basket of divinatory bones. It is a resumé of
their whole social order, of all their institutions, and the bones, when they
fall, provide them with an instantaneous picture of all that may befall
them. This system is so elaborate that I do not hesitate to say that,
together with their language, their folklore, their lobola customs and
their burial rites, it is the product of their psychic life which shows most
intelligence. If the premises of divination are accepted, astragalomancy
seems to me vastly superior to cheiromancy and all the other systems
which have been invented by us. It is also superior to the divination
by four tablets of ivory or wood practised by a certain number of South
African tribes, a description of which will be found in Appendix VI (1).

But if this system of divination is a proof of great intelligence, it 787
must be confessed that *its results*, as shown in the psychic life of the tribe, 155
182

(1) There are some grounds for thinking that divination by astragalus bones is very old in the history of mankind. The Greeks practised *astragalomancy*. In a paper to which I shall refer in App. VI, the Rev. N. Roberts mentions the temple of Dodone, in which, according to Cicero, there was a large brass basin with the statue of a man upon it, and this man held in his hands a whip with three straps from which hung small astragalus bones. When these bones were set in motion by the wind, they struck against the basin and the sounds thus produced had a prophetic character. This was astragalomancy, but of a very different kind from that just described. Aristotle makes frequent allusions to the astragalus bone and says, inter alia, that one of its sides, named coon, represents the figure 6 ; another, named *chion*, the figure 1, etc. This shows that in his time the astragalus bone was already identified with the dice. The dice, also called *αστραγαλος* in Greek is simply an astragalus bone whose sides have been cut so as to form a perfect cube. We find traces of the use of the astragalus even further back in the past. Angelo Mosso, quoted by the same author, asserts that he found many astragalus in Italy, where they were used in connection with primitive religion as far back as the neolithic period. The discovery in the lake of Neuchâtel of a collection of more than thirty astragalus in the lake dwellers' station of Auvernier may be a proof that these bones did in truth play a part in the customs of primitive humanity. If this is so, then the Bantus have preserved the astragalus as they did the wooden pillow of the old Egyptians, the ancestrolatry of the Mousterians and the "mbava" (p. 93) of the Libyans. The astragalus is still employed in play to represent cattle by Swiss children in the Canton of Valais, and I am told that the South African Boers have the same custom, and call these bones dol-osse.

3) How are taboos *dealt with?* 784

Happily the danger of taboos can be removed, otherwise
life would be almost impossible! The medicine-men have the 789
necessary drugs to protect their poor fellow-men against the misfortune (khombo) which is always threatening them! Is not the whole arsenal of magic at their disposal? Rites in great numbers provide the necessary protection, especially the *luma rite*, which is the proper method of avoiding the special dangers connected with the *first use* of anything. The wish to obtain protection against all these dangers explains the immense influence of the medicine-men, of those who know the preventive drugs to be used against defilement and misfortune.

It is impossible to attain to a true knowledge of the taboos 784
without studying the laws of *their suspension*. Taboos are sometimes suspended. The chief, for instance, is above them, at any rate above some of them, being himself a magical being, a tabooed personage (I. p. 382). The collectivity has a still greater power over them and can cancel them. There are times when all these prohibitions, or at least some of them, are withdrawn; these are the marginal periods, when we behold the strange spectacle that ordinary taboos are suspended (language taboos, relatives-in-law taboos), whilst others are enforced (sexual taboos). I have often drawn attention to this curious phenomenon.

B. MORAL RESTRAINTS.

But taboos are not the only kind of restraint to which primitive 183
Bantus submit themselves. The following statements have been 604
collected from old or young informants who were urged to express their inner feelings on this question:

1) The maternal uncle must provide the ntehe for the first child of his sister. However this is not *yila*, it is a *nau*, a law, and if it is transgressed no direct harm will follow. (I. p. 46.)

2) Men and women do not bathe in the same spot in the lake 183
of Rikatla. Why? Not on account of a yila, but on account of 834

R